# THE BASAL BELIEFS OF CHRISTIANITY

SNOWDEN

RIDER



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By
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To

PRESIDENT

JOHN A. MARQUIS, D.D., LL.D.

SCHOLAR, THINKER, PREACHER, EDUCATOR

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# PREFACE

DOCTRINE is the necessary foundation on which duty and deed are built, or the root out of which they spring as flower and fruit. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. Every rational deed issues from a thought, thought when it becomes critical and constructive shapes itself into a doctrine, and doctrine builds a system of truth. Thus every one is a psychologist and theologian and philosopher, whether he knows it or not. All Christian preaching and practice must root itself in doctrine and cannot be clearer and stronger than the doctrine out of which it grows. Yet "doctrinal preaching" is not a popular program and is supposed to be somewhat repellent. There is no avoiding it, however; the very denial of doctrine is itself a doctrine, and the rankest sensationalist, denouncing doctrine, is yet himself preaching it, though it may be of a very poor kind.

One danger with our doctrines is that they may fall out of touch with our day, if not in substance and spirit, then in form and expression. They necessarily change with the changing intellectual,

social and spiritual climate of their age, a change that may be slow and unperceived in a short time, but is sure and plain in the long run. When one reads a sermon fifty or a hundred years old he is at once aware of a style and tone different from the preaching of to-day. Such change is evidence of the continuous adaptability of Christian truth to varying human needs; a sign, not of decay and death, but of vigorous and fruitful life. Truth is permanent in its essential nature, but its interpretation and application are progressive. We still wear clothes, but fashions change; we eat food, but the dishes differ. Yet this doctrinal expression may change too slowly and thus lag behind the times. If doctrines are preached to-day as they were in former days they will strike the present generation as strange and unattractive; whereas if they are set forth in the life and language of to-day they may find a welcome reception.

Doctrine should also be presented, not as a dry and rattling skeleton, but clothed in flesh and blood and pulsing warm with life. Bones are useful members of the anatomy, but the higher animals do not wear them on the outside. Doctrine should appeal directly to experience. It should be woven of the same threads as the general web of human life, and its illustrations should be concrete bits of

daily happenings. This will relieve it of its foreign and uninteresting air and bring it home to every one's business and bosom. The Gospel of Jesus Christ fills a deep and permanent want in the universal human heart, and when its doctrines are thus presented they prove themselves attractive and popular, satisfying and successful.

The present volume is an attempt to state the basal beliefs of Christianity in a form for popular readers. It touches lightly on deep and difficult matters and emphasizes the broad and practical aspects of Christian facts and faith. Its object is to present these doctrines so as to show their meaning, their ground in truth and reason, and their application in character and life. The book of course contains nothing new and only aims to give new expression to old truths. It is not intended for theologians or ministers, but mainly for lay readers, Sabbath school teachers and Christian workers. Pastors might use it as a basis of study with classes of young people, and thus take them over the principal points of Christian doctrine. If it helps its readers to gain a somewhat clearer view of Christian truth and to hold it more firmly and work it out more fruitfully in life and service, its aim will be accomplished.

Washington, Pa.

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O God, Thou hast made us for Thyself, and we cannot rest until we rest in Thee.—*St. Augustine.*

Look on our divinest Symbol: Jesus of Nazareth and His life and His biography and what followed therefrom. Higher has the human thought not yet reached: this is Christianity and Christendom, a symbol of quite perennial, infinite character: whose significance will ever demand to be anew inquired into and anew made manifest.—*Carlyle.*

I say the acknowledgment of God in Christ
Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee
All questions in the earth and out of it,
And has so far advanced thee to be wise.
—*Browning.*

Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen Thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, thou:
Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, to make them Thine.
—*Tennyson.*

Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.—*Paul.*

# THE BASAL BELIEFS OF CHRISTIANITY

## CHAPTER I

### THE SOURCES OF OUR KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

In entering any field of study it is well to look it over and see what means of knowledge it offers, what are the sources of light upon it. Christian belief begins and ends with the Creator, and we therefore begin these studies by considering the sources of our knowledge of God.

I. A widely accepted modern doctrine is agnosticism, which contends that our minds are so constituted that they cannot reach ultimate reality and therefore can never know God. All we can ever know are the appearances that present themselves to our senses, but not the realities that lie back of them. It turns out, however, that these appearances are themselves operations of the Unknowable Power, which is Herbert Spencer's name for the ultimate reality of all things which we call God;





and therefore our knowledge of these operations is so much knowledge of this Unknowable Power, which is so far known, and its name is thus robbed of terror and reduced to a contradiction. Mr. Spencer himself wrote ten large volumes of philosophy based on this agnostic principle, and yet every line of his more than six thousand pages in so far as it contains truth tells us something about this Unknowable Power, which thus becomes the object of a vast amount of human knowledge. The truth is that we know God through his works just as we can know anybody or anything. All our knowledge, therefore, is so much knowledge of God. Every ray of truth reveals him as every ray of daylight shoots from the sun. God is the field of all knowledge, explored and unexplored, and whenever we find out any new truth we know something more about him. Every fact, truth, experience is a revelation of him, a mirror that reflects some light from his face.

II. Nature is therefore a grand source of knowledge of God. This was the first witness that caught the attention of man, and is still the most picturesque and powerful appeal to his mind and heart. Its starry skies are a spangled banner on which his handiwork is inscribed in letters that even savage eyes can read, and all its myriad forces and

harmonies spell a cosmos that the scientists and philosophers are ever deciphering. The universe is a system of law and order, intelligence and purpose. It is a vast volume written in a language that matches the intelligence of the human mind. That it was framed by a supreme mind and is a revelation of his thought and purpose is proved as conclusively as that books of science, which are mere tiny transcripts from nature's book, are also the products of mind and purpose. The astronomer simply reads the infinite volume of the sky and is reading the mind of God as certainly as we read the mind of the astronomer in his volume. All science, then, is knowledge of God, and science is simply a department of theology. And the same principle applies to history, literature, philosophy, art, and to all knowledge whatsoever; it all brings its grist to the mill of theology; it all tells us something about God. Nature, then, is God made visible and vivid to us. The mountains are his thoughts spread out, the seas his thoughts poured into their vast basins, the stars are his thoughts on fire, the flowers are his thoughts shaped into lovely forms. So we are ever to look upon nature as a revelation of his sublime face and see in its illuminated pages an older bible that rolled from his hand.

III. Man himself is a revelation of God and a primary source of our knowledge of him. Every manifestation of a power must be judged by its highest and not by its lowest form or product, the plant by its blossom and not by its root. Man is the topmost and finest blossom of this world, and therefore is nearer to God and more like him than anything else we know. Furthermore, it is a fundamental principle of all psychology and philosophy that we cannot know anything except through our own minds and in terms of our own experience. Anything totally foreign to our minds would be wholly unknown and unknowable to us; we could not even conceive it, much less know or believe it. We can interpret what is outside of us only by means of what is inside. It follows that we can know God only because we are like him and can interpret his being and thought only in terms of our own. In this sense our own minds are the necessary and primary source of our knowledge of God, as of all things else. The outstanding fact and feature in the constitution of man is that he is a person, a spirit endowed with reason, feeling and will, fused into unity and living a rational and moral life. This fact at once throws a broad beam of light upon God and reveals him to us as a Person. All our further knowledge of God may be

said to be an unfolding of his personality into his nature and his relations to us.

IV. This human revelation of God comes to its highest expression in one race and literature, the Jewish race, the best portions of whose literature have been winnowed out and stored up in the Bible. God has bestowed differing gifts on races and nations: upon the Greeks the genius of intellect blossoming out in philosophy and art, and upon the Romans organizing power that built the greatest political fabric the world has ever seen. In the same way he bestowed upon the Jews a genius for religion, sensitiveness to his presence and voice. They presented to him an organism into which he could breathe his thoughts or through which he could blow his music more fully and richly than through any other race. They were a chosen people for the high mission of transmitting his revelation of redemption to the world. Their great prophets and poets were mountain peaks that caught the light of the rising Sun of Righteousness earlier than any others and reflected it out upon the world. The inspired history and teachings of this people are preserved for us in the Bible,which is thus a special and incomparable revelation to us of God, a chief source of our knowledge of him.

V. This chosen race came to its highest and

one perfect blossom in Jesus Christ, the fulfilment of all that went before in the Old Testament, and the flower of the New Testament whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. He was at once perfect Man and perfect God, the express image of his person and the brightness of his glory. Through him the Spirit of God poured in unobstructed splendor. He that hath seen him hath seen the Father. When he speaks God speaks, and when he acts God's will is done. His hand has shaped the centuries, and all our modern world is arranging itself around him. When we want to know what God is like, we need only look into the face of Jesus Christ. He is therefore our richest and purest source of knowledge of God, and all other knowledge should be tested by this master light of all our seeing.

VI. Yet one other source remains that is more important than all others: personal experience. However much we may know of an object through the indirect processes of hearing or reading about it, we can know it directly and deeply only as we enter into practical relations with it and it enters vitally into our experience. Such experience is knowledge at first hand and is clearer and surer than all indirect knowledge. This principle especially applies to our knowledge of persons. We

know them intimately only as we enter into personal fellowship with them. Our knowledge of God becomes vivid and vital and is transmuted into character and life only as we know him through personal faith and fellowship, service and sacrifice. Our logical knowledge of him may then be superficial and easily puzzled, but our practical acquaintance with him may be profound and calm and comforting, as the surface of the sea may be swept with storm and torn into spray and foam while its central deeps are undisturbed and full of peace. At this point the humblest heart may know God as truly and intimately as the greatest scholar. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant."

These various sources of knowledge combine into an effulgence of light so that we may know God as truly as we know any object of nature or any friend. Instead of being an unknowable God, all our knowledge converges upon him to disclose him to us in a blaze of light.

## CHAPTER II

### THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

THE name God denotes an infinite personal Spirit, the Creator and Governor of all things. Why do we believe in such a Being?

I. Our belief in God is older and deeper than any reasons we can give for it. We do not frame arguments for the existence of God and then believe in him, but we believe in him and then frame arguments to confirm our belief. All our fundamental beliefs spring out of our practical needs, and it is only long after we have developed and used them that we endeavor to prove them. It is in religion as in all things else: art precedes science, faith precedes logic. Men lived in the sunlight long before they studied the sun, and cultivated the soil ages before they understood its chemistry. We are born with a set of instincts, appetites and impulses which immediately push us into action before we can think about them or even become conscious of them. Psychology is one of the latest of the sciences. The soul usually has developed its

habits and the main body of its beliefs before it inquires into the processes of their growth. Men worshiped God long ages before they ever thought of raising the question of his existence. The race started, as the individual starts, with unquestioning faith, and doubt is a late development.

We have certain instinctive feelings and practical needs that immediately issue in belief in God. The feeling of dependence is one of our primary instincts. The babe clings to its mother, and we never grow out of this practical need. As we grow up we find ourselves environed in a Power that stretches away into the infinite, and we feel ourselves in its clutch as a mote is in the grip of gravitation. Our hearts are made to respond to this Power and to fall upon it as upon the bosom of a Father and there find peace and rest. In a similar way the world appeals to our minds to believe that it is not a blind chaos, but the expression of a personal Being who made the world and cares for us. We find that we simply cannot live a worthy life in this world without believing it is the product and expression of a personal God. Such a belief fits into and satisfies our nature, it gives order and significance to all our experiences, and every other belief throws the world into confusion and leaves us bewildered and blind. It is true

that this is the beginning of reasoning on the problem of the world, but such reason is largely latent and has not emerged into conscious processes. So we start with a practical belief in God which is deeper and stronger than all our reasoning. Reasoning did not create it, therefore reasoning can seldom destroy it. There is no danger that skeptical science and philosophy will drive religious faith out of the world, because such faith is rooted in the heart, and the heart is older and deeper than the brain.

II. Yet this instinctive practical faith soon comes into contact with our reasoning powers and must stand this test. Here as elsewhere we must prove all things and hold fast that which is true. There are great arguments which, while they do not originate our belief in God, yet do show us that our faith is well grounded and thereby clarify and confirm it. One of these is known as the cosmological argument, or the argument from the principle of causation. We derive this principle from our own experience in the exercise of our wills. When we will a certain action we are immediately aware that our will is the cause and that the action follows as its effect. We soon learn to discern effects and to trace them back to their causes. Now the world is full of changes that bear the

marks of being effects, and the world itself appears to us in this light. It is not an unchanging thing, but at every moment it springs out of a prior condition. It is therefore an effect which must have had a cause. As we know that a manufactured fabric must have had a sufficient cause in a maker, so we are forced to believe that the world itself must have a Cause that is sufficient to account for it. It has been objected to this argument that it does not prove an infinite Cause, but only a cause sufficient to produce a finite world. But any finite cause is itself dependent and caused, and we do not reach a true First Cause until we leap back of the succession or chain of events to a Cause that is itself uncaused; and thus our sense of causation as regards the world is not satisfied until we reach God.

III. Another principal argument for the existence of God is the well-known argument from design, which is really a special application of the argument from cause. The world bears the marks of mind as well as the marks of dependence. It is an intelligible fabric throughout, a tissue of intellectual relations. All its forms and forces are letters that spell words of law and order, wisdom and purpose. The astronomer reads the vast volume of the heavens and transcribes what he reads

into the little volume of his science. Every other science is doing the same thing, and thus science is slowly but surely deciphering the book of nature. Nowhere does the scientist ever find any irregular or irrational fact or event, but everywhere he finds exact and beautiful order and purpose. And he has absolute confidence that the same order and purpose everywhere pervade the universe, and that there is in it no secret corner or hidden depth that conceals one atom of irrationality. Now we never fail to connect a book that can be read with a a mind that wrote it. Such a book is a mirror in which we see reflected another mind like our own. Nature itself is just such a book in which we see mirrored the mind of its Author. Unless, then, it takes more intelligence to construe the book of nature than to construct it, to read it than to write it, we must look through it into the mind of its Author and see a personal God.

IV. A chief argument for the existence of God is man himself. Everything that comes out in the effect must have been in the cause. The stream can rise no higher than its source, and the maker cannot be lower and less than what he has made. Man is a product, and as such throws light upon God. Man is an intelligent person, and therefore God cannot fall below this plane. His person-

ality may be infinitely higher than that of man, but it cannot be less. Every faculty in man must be a tiny shadow of a corresponding power in God. Not only so, but God must match and satisfy the nature of man at every point, otherwise he has produced an irrational creature with a falsehood inwrought into its very constitution. The instinctive needs and yearnings of man, his spiritual faculties of faith and aspiration and worship, must all find their home and satisfaction in God. Man is a child who calls for a Father, and he trusts his own cry as a sure ground of faith in him.

The reality that is closest and surest to us is first our own soul and next the world in which we live. The soul within us and the world without are irrational fragments and cruel disappointments and deceptions unless they are completed in an infinite Creator and Father. Without God all things are emptied of rationality and hope, and the world becomes a miserable muddle; with God on the throne, all things fall into order and harmony, wisdom and love. This comprehensive reason convinces and satisfies the mind and heart; and therefore we believe in God.

V. What would the world be without a God? Let Jean Paul Richter answer in his *Dream of a World Without a God*: "I dreamed I was in a

churchyard at midnight. Overhead I heard the thunder of distant avalanches and beneath my feet the first footfalls of a boundless earthquake. Lightning gleamed athwart the church windows and the lead and iron frames melted and rolled down. Christ appeared and all the dead cried out, 'Is there no God?' And Christ answered, 'There is none. I have traversed the worlds, I have risen to the suns, with the milky ways I have passed athwart the great waste spaces of the sky: there is no God. And I descended to where the very shadow cast by Being dies out and ends, and I gazed out into the gulf beyond and cried, "Father, where art thou?" But answer came none, save the eternal storm which rages on. We are orphans all, both I and you. We have no Father.' Then the universe sank and became a mine dug in the face of the black eternal night besprent with thousand suns. And Christ cried, 'Oh, mad unreasoning Chance; Knowest thou—thou knowest not—where thou dost march, hurricane-winged, amid the whirling snow of stars, extinguishing sun after sun on thy onward way, and when the sparkling dew of constellations ceases to gleam, as thou dost pass by? How every soul in this great corpse-trench of a universe is utterly alone?' And I fell down and peered into the shining mass of worlds, and

beheld the coils of the great Serpent of eternity twined about those worlds; these mighty coils began to writhe and then again they tightened and contracted, folding around the universe twice as closely as before; they wound about all nature in thousand folds, and crashed the worlds together. And all grew narrow and dark and terrible. And then a great immeasurable bell began to swing and toll the last hour of time and shatter the fabric of the universe, when my sleep broke up and I awoke. And my soul wept for joy that I could still worship God—my gladness and my weeping and my faith, these were my prayer."

## CHAPTER III

### THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

After the existence of God has been proved or belief in him has been accepted the value of such belief depends on the kind of God who is thus believed in. One of the fundamental questions as to the nature of God is his personality.

I. Pantheism denies the personality of God. While holding to an ultimate ground of all things, yet it views this as an Absolute in which there is no consciousness or will except such as emerges in human or other finite manifestations or aspects of this all-inclusive being. Such an Absolute may well up in us as consciousness, but in itself is an infinite abyss or womb out of which all finite things arise and into which they again fall back, as waves and bubbles emerge out of the sea, for a moment float on its surface and then sink into its formless depths. "An immense solitary specter—it hath no shape, it hath no sound, it hath no time, it hath no place. It is, it was, it will be, it is never more or less, nor sad nor glad. It is nothing—and the sands

fall down in the hour-glass, and the hands sweep around the dial and men alone live and strive and hate and love and know it." Pantheism saturates the thought and life of India and the Far East, and there it brings forth its fatalistic fruits. The doctrine is logically and practically destructive of all true religion and runs straight to fatalism and in the end is equally destructive of the personality of man. In such a world all things are necessary and equally good or evil, and man himself is only one of the myriad bubbles on the surface of the weltering ocean of being and his personality one of the countless illusions of the world.

II. Theism opposes to pantheism the doctrine of the personality of God. It affirms that the creative Cause of the world is a spirit endowed with intelligence, sensibility and will, fused into the unity of personality and living a free moral life. Its reasons for this affirmation are the same grounds that prove the existence of God. Our instinctive belief in God is that he is a personal being and no other kind of God would satisfy our practical needs. All early views of God are intensely personalistic, and pantheism is a late development. The historic proofs of the existence of God that have stood the stress of the ages all arrive at a personal God. The cosmological or causal argument

springs from a personal root in our own wills. We immediately know cause only as it is exercised in ourselves, and as every effect we thus know and cause is the product of a personal will, so we can view the world itself only as having been caused in the same way. Still more directly and conclusively does the argument from design lead to a personal Creator. The marks of order and purpose we see in the world are all mirrors that reflect a personal intelligence, the only kind of intelligence we can conceive. And as man himself is one of our chief arguments for God, so he is one of our chief proofs of God's personality. To suppose that the Cause of the world is a blind abyss or womb that could eject streams of consciousness that rise higher than their source is to contradict all our principles of belief. Thus the world itself, especially in its highest forms or products, forbids our falling into the pit of pantheism and drives us up to the summit of theism.

III. Yet philosophy has raised a difficulty in the way of theism that has profoundly affected even our Occidental thinking and carried some of our greatest thinkers near if not into the pantheism of the Orient. This is the doctrine that personality implies limitation, and therefore cannot apply to the Infinite and Absolute being. It involves, it is

said, the necessary relation of self to others and, more definitely, of subject and object, and such relations would destroy the very constitution of the Infinite and the Absolute. This difficulty is more verbal than real and grows out of our definitions rather than out of our experience. The self is at once subject and object in our own experience, and the same may be true of higher beings, even of God.

The answer to this difficulty is that personality is not a limitation but an added power. It is the ability to know and feel and act, and this is not a contraction but an enormous expansion of being. The absence of such ability would be a limitation and loss beyond any other possible loss. The fact is that our human personality is imperfect and germinal, only a faint shadow of what even we may conceive personality to be. In conception we can remove the barriers that contract and hinder our personality, and this process carried to its logical limit gives us an infinite Person, or God. As Lotze shows in his great chapter on the personality of God, "Perfect Personality is in God only, to all finite minds there is alloted but a pale copy thereof; the finiteness of the finite is not a producing condition of this Personality but a limit and a hindrance to its development." One of the great triumphs of

modern philosophy, as we believe, is its demonstration that personality is not necessary limitation and that it arises to its logical perfection in God.

IV. Yet we are not to suppose that the personality of God is a mere copy or enlargement of our human personality. If God were the simple unitary consciousness that we experience in ourselves, what kind of existence did he lead in the eternity before he put forth his creative power in worlds and in finite spirits? The question plunges us into profound difficulties, and is in danger of leading us back into pantheism. Philosophy has worked out a higher conception of God's personality than a copy of our own. We are not without hints or germs of such higher personality in our own souls. Our consciousness breaks into the three different kinds of experience which we call intelligence, sensibility and will. These are quite distinct in kind, and yet they fuse into one consciousness. Might not these be projected into higher states of development in which they would become still more distinct and begin to show in themselves some of the powers or aspects of personality? This would result in a complex consciousness in which there would be some of the interrelations of social life and love. It is such a conception that some philosophers denominate "hyperpersonality," which simply means a

type of personality lying on a higher level and living a more exalted and perfect life than our own.

Here we have evidently arrived at the borders of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. While God in the Old Testament is emphatically a monotheistic God, yet in the New Testament and in Christian experience he unfolds into a trinitarian God in which three persons co-exist in a social life; and yet these three are not three Gods, but one God. We can hardly state the doctrine without involving ourselves in inconsistent language and logic, and yet it is deeply rooted in philosophy, in Scripture and in Christian experience. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are the three persons of the Godhead who dwelt in reciprocal life and love through all eternity, and who manifest their unitary life in creation, providence and redemption. This is indeed one of the "high mysteries" of our faith, but it lies at the root of our philosophical and theological thought and enters vitally into our Christian experience; and so it must be included among our basal beliefs.[1]

[1] For a fuller discussion of the subjects considered in paragraphs III and IV see the author's *The World a Spiritual System: an Outline of Metaphysics,* pp. 183-194.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CHARACTER OF GOD

EVEN more important than the question of the personality of God is the question of his character. Belief in a good God is the source of optimistic faith and life, but belief in an evil God would spread the blackest cloud that could be conceived over the sky of the universe.

I. God is a moral being. This results directly from his personality. A free will acting in the light of intelligence under the pressure of feelings is the foundation of responsibility and moral character, and we have already seen that God possesses these powers. The moral character of man is also a proof of the moral character of God, on the principle that every essential element in the nature of man must have had its roots in God and is an outgrowth of his nature. Conscience is the imperial power in man, legislating on all matters of conduct, imposing its decrees and bestowing its rewards and retribution, and therefore we must believe that the same power exists in its highest perfection in God.

II. But the question still confronts us whether this moral nature of God is good, or evil, or a mixture of both. The fact that we find ourselves in a world of mixed good and evil throws doubt upon this question and has made it one of the great enigmas of the ages. The world of nature is sown with storm and strife, pain and death, and the human world is a scene of discord and hatred, disease and misery, sin and crime. Does not such a world throw its black shadow up against the character of God himself? Can a good God produce an evil world, and does not an evil world point to an evil God? The human mind and heart has wrestled with these questions through all ages, and they have ever been the world's Gethsemane. Yet in spite of these evils men have generally believed in a good God, and nearly all the religions of the world, especially the higher and purer ones, have held to this faith. As to the evils in nature, they are seen to be in a large degree only apparent, imputed to nature by our own imagination, and the planet is seen to be a world still in the making and in a state of evolution towards higher perfection. As to the evils in our human world, they are seen to be largely due to human responsibility and transgression. Man is a germinal being in his faculties and a fallen being by reason of his disobedience to moral law as known

to his own conscience. The world is fitted up to suit such a being. It is a school in which his germinal powers are being developed, a hospital in which his physical and moral diseases are being healed, and a field of service in which he is working out the great problems and ends of his existence. In the light of these facts we believe that, in spite of the vast amount of evil in the world, God is not responsible for it, except in the sense that he has seen wise to permit it, and that he is good. Just how to reconcile his goodness with evil at particular points is often a problem that lies far beyond our power, and yet we believe that the skirts of his holiness are clear and that with sufficient knowledge we could pluck the heart out of this mystery.

III. The light of reason and nature must ever remain dim in the presence of this great problem and can never reach a full and final solution. It is at this point that revelation lets fall its fuller light. The Bible is a record of this revelation. In broad contrast with heathen gods that are more or less stained with human faults and vices and are only magnified sinful men, the God of the Bible is a God of righteousness. "Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" is the central question of the Old Testament and all its teaching in precept and

example, doctrine and ordinance, reveals God in the light of holiness. The New Testament advances to a still higher view of the moral nature of God. Its central principle is that "God is love" and it sets forth all his attributes and activities as manifestations of this element. The total teaching of the Bible on this point is that God is light and in him is no darkness at all.

IV. The supreme revelation of the character of God is Jesus Christ. His white life grew up out of the hard soil of Judea as the one perfect thing this world has ever seen. After all these centuries of moral advancement and philosophical study of ethics his character is still the perfect pattern of goodness, the only flawless diamond that shines resplendent amidst all the imperfect jewels of character in the world. In him all virtues and graces combine in faultless proportion and harmony. Truth and trust, purity and patience and peace, meekness and manliness, gentleness and goodness and love, sympathy and service and sacrifice blend their various rays into the pure light of his white soul, and he shines as the Star of the ages, the Sun of Righteousness. That Character, no dream of a novelist or vision of a poet, was a living Fact in the world, and as such it bears witness to the nature of the First Cause out of which the world came;

it throws a powerful beam of light into the very heart of God. "He that hath seen me," said Christ, "hath seen the Father," and this is the true import of his life and character. In Jesus Christ God has come forth in visible form so that men could see his face and touch his hand and assuredly know what manner of God he is; and in the light of his Son we know that the Father is holiness and love.

V. Holiness and love are the two fundamental attributes of God. Holiness is God's purity and righteousness. It is that element in his nature by which he is free from all wrong and by which he possesses all right. Holiness is primarily a self-regarding attribute in God, the self-affirmation of the integrity and worth of his character. It is therefore something that must be exercised and maintained in all conditions and at all cost. It is the standard of right for the universe, and is the law of character and conduct for all creatures. The love of God is his benevolence or good will or affection, first for himself in his trinitarian relations, and then for his creatures. It is his expansive nature by which he pours himself into other lives and shares with them his own blessedness. The love of God is thus his other-regarding attribute and is his self-impartation.

The relation of these fundamental attributes in

the character of God has been much discussed. Some hold that holiness is the more fundamental attribute and that love is an element or aspect of it, and others reverse this relation and make love the more fundamental attribute with holiness or justice as one of its elements. Thus Dr. W. N. Clarke says that "holiness is central in God, but love is central in holiness"; and President Strong, reversing this relation, says that "love is central in God, but holiness is central in love." The perfection of either of these attributes involves the other. Perfect holiness will be loving, and perfect love will be holy, and both are central and all-pervasive in the character of God. Yet it must be admitted that there is a larger voluntary element in love than in holiness. God must be just, but he exercises his love according to his free will.

With a holy loving God on the throne of the universe, with a good Father in the world, all existence becomes rational, moral and hopeful, and our human life becomes a childhood in its Father's home.

## CHAPTER V

### THE FATHERHOOD AND THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

THESE two attributes or aspects of God have sometimes been set in competition and have even been regarded as being in "suicidal contradiction"; but a proper view of their nature and relations shows that they are mutually complementary and harmonious. Either would not be perfect without the other.

I. Fatherhood is essential in the nature of God. He did not begin to be a Father when he created finite spirits, but he was Father from all eternity. The Godhead is essentially and eternally a relationship or society of personal distinctions in which Father, Son and Spirit exist in mutual love. This complex rich nature of the Godhead is independent of the act of creation, and is the necessary condition of the blessedness and the very existence of God. Without these internal and essential relations God would sink into a unitary Absolute or pantheistic Fate in which all thought and will and love would be impossible. The doctrine of the Trinity is

grounded, not only in Scripture and Christian experience, but also in philosophy, and is the root out of which spring all created fatherhoods and sonships and personal relations. The core of fatherhood is kinship and love; it is a self-imparting and expansive nature that goes out to find satisfaction in others of its own kind. It was this Fatherhood in God that prompted him to create human children. His Fatherhood was eternally satisfied in his own eternal Son, but it also sought further expression and satisfaction in created sons. His Fatherhood to his eternal Son was the source and pattern of his Fatherhood to his created sons, and the sonship of the eternal Son was the pattern of created sonship. This is the meaning of Paul when he said that he bowed his knees "unto the Father, from whom every fatherhood in heaven and on earth is named." Thus Fatherhood is essential in God, and is the eternal fountain out of which all human sonships flow.

II. God's sovereignty is his right and power to rule; it is his control over all things, subject to no external power and determined only by his own will and nature. This sovereignty is expressed in his eternal purpose and decrees, by which he determines whatsoever comes to pass. These decrees must include the whole creation in its broad plan

and least details. Human wills must be comprised within God's purpose, otherwise there would be areas of his world in which he would not be sovereign. His foreknowledge must see in the light of omniscience every future event, or he would be subject to continual surprise and be exposed to failure or defeat. Yet God's sovereignty must evidently exercise a control over human acts different from that which he exercises over non-personal agents. His sovereignty over all that lies below the personal plane is absolute, and the world of nature is the expression of his pure thought and will; but the world of personal spirits is not subject to such sovereignty, for this would destroy its free agency and responsibility and thereby depersonalize it. Divine sovereignty must respect human freedom. Yet this is not a limitation on the divine sovereignty, but only a description of what is possible to it. God can still work with, in and through the human will so as to work out his purpose. Even the human soul can influence and control another soul in accordance with the nature of the soul, and one clothed with great personal power or official authority can thus sway multitudes of men: much more can God thus control them. Through permission, restraint, positive influence and action God can accomplish his will and is sovereign at every

point. Such sovereignty is the foundation of his throne, without which God would not be God.

III. These two aspects must now be brought into relation and harmony. The divine Fatherhood must have the divine sovereignty; fatherhood without sovereignty would degenerate into indulgence and pitiful weakness, and thereby defeat the very end of fatherhood. Fatherhood looks on its children as its own kin, the objects of its own care and love, in whose beatitude it finds its own satisfaction and joy. Such fatherhood must therefore have the wisdom to see, the righteousness to impose, and the power to enforce the true conditions of the good of its children. A father who is deficient at any of these points so that he does not have the intellectual and ethical insight to discern and the firmness and power to require the right conditions of life and character, will do his children more harm than good, and may unwittingly turn out to be their greatest enemy. Many a family has been ruined through the ignorant or weak indulgence of a kind father. The Fatherhood of God is saved at this point by his sovereignty. His omniscience and omnipotence, his wisdom and righteousness, reside within his Fatherhood and give it guidance and firmness. His love would cease to be true love if it were not informed and sustained by his righteous-

ness and authority, and thus his sovereignty saves his Fatherhood.

IV. In like manner God's Fatherhood informs and guides his sovereignty. There are several types of sovereignty among men, from which we derive our conceptions of divine sovereignty. There is the absolute sovereignty of despotism, which consists in sheer power and arbitrary will. Law does not make the despot, but the despot makes law. Such a conception of sovereignty does not apply to God. The next type of sovereignty is that of the constitutional monarch. He does not make law, but law makes him, and the same law that enthroned may also dethrone him. Neither does this type of sovereignty apply to God. An older type of sovereignty is the paternal. In this the father begets the son and rules over him by natural and necessary right. At first this rule is practically absolute, as the child is in the unconscious dependence of infancy. But as the child grows into maturity and full responsibility the paternal sovereignty of the father grows into the guidance of wisdom and the joy of fellowship. The father now exercises a gentle control over the son, and sovereignty is almost lost in love; and yet it is still there and, if occasion were to arise, could and would show itself in decisive and even terrible action. Yet the father

is not thinking of his sovereignty in his relations with his children, but of their beatitude and of his own joy in them. It is this paternal type of sovereignty that exists in its perfection in God. God is love, and his whole nature goes out toward his children for their good and for his own glory.

The divine Fatherhood and the divine sovereignty are thus mutually complementary and are interfused into one nature. Fatherhood without sovereignty would be blind and weak indulgence that would work ultimate harm, and sovereignty without Fatherhood would be despotism intolerable on earth or in heaven. Neither office can be discharged without the other. The two, so far from being antagonistic or in "suicidal contradiction," are coincident in origin and exercise, and only as they blend into one perfect nature does God become God, the Father of his children and the Ruler of his universe, the Source of all blessing to his creatures and blessed in himself forevermore.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE RELATION OF GOD TO THE WORLD

THE theistic and Christian view of the world is that it is the product of God's creative wisdom and will, in which he dwells and works out his purposes. The world falls into two distinct parts: nature and man; and these may be considered separately.

I. Nature is all that part of the world that falls below the personal plane. All theistic theories regard it as the outgoing of God in creative thought and energy by which he gives expression to his intelligence, feeling and will. We find that nature is an intellectual fabric throughout, expressing and embodying thought as plainly as a book; and equally it is an emotional fabric, a vast artistic canvas shot through with the forms and colors of beauty, a poem surcharged with delicate sentiment and majestic passion, a sublime symphony of music rolling through the ages; and once more it is equally a mighty act, a stream of volitional energy flowing through all things and embodying itself in definite

deeds. The world of nature is thus a manifestation of the thoughts God is thinking, of the emotions he is feeling, and of the deeds he is doing; it is his own employment and enjoyment. It is the pure product of his own being; but this is not the same as saying that it was "created out of nothing," a meaningless phrase that has no basis in Scripture, science or philosophy. The world is the product of God's own activity, the expression of his own thought and will, and beyond this ultimate fact we cannot go.

II. Two leading views are entertained as to the nature of the world in its relation to God. The first is dualism, which holds the common traditional view that matter is an extended insensate substance, of a different nature from mind, external to mind, and acting under necessary mechanical laws. This extended insensate substance with its mechanical laws was created in the beginning by God; and thus nature was set up and set agoing as a vast machine external to God, a huge mass or lump that lies outside of him and operates according to its own laws, though still under his control. This machine is also external to human souls and all finite spirits, and is in a subordinate degree subject to human control. This view of nature works badly when introduced into theology. It tends towards deism,

which puts God outside of his world so that he stands aloof from it and keeps his hands off it; and it interposes between God and man a mechanical system that threatens to obstruct their mutual relations and fellowship. It was this dualistic view of the world that enabled Hume to deal the Christian religion such a deep wound with his objection to miracles as a stoppage of the machine of nature which no amount of human evidence could prove.

III. The other view of nature is that of idealism, which has long prevailed in the field of philosophy and is now invading theology, a view that was held by Augustine and Calvin and Jonathan Edwards, and is now held by such leading theologians as President Strong in this country and Prof. Rashdall in England. According to this view, nature itself is a spiritual system, an immediate manifestation of the thought and feeling and will of God. Nature as we know it is the experience we have as our minds react on God's mind, or as his Spirit environs and operates upon our spirits. It is therefore not an extended and insensate substance and is nothing apart from God, but is his own life as he thinks and feels and wills the world. The world sustains somewhat the same relation to him as our thoughts and emotions and purposes do to our own minds and hearts, as the poet's vision does to his imagi-

nation and the musician's song to his soul. The world is therefore not a machine external to God, but is a spiritual state or system immanent in God and manifesting itself to finite spirits through the causal relations it sustains to them. The physical energies or laws of the world are not mechanical forces of a non-spiritual nature, but are the ways in which the will of God regularly works in the light of his wisdom. The laws of nature are thus simply the habits of God, and are constantly subject to and are the expression of his wisdom and will. This sweeps away the external mechanical system that has been so troublesome and dangerous in theology and in Christian experience, and ushers us into the immediate presence of "him with whom we have to do."

IV. This view furnishes a congenial system for providence and for the supernatural. It interposes no intractable mechanism between us and God, in which we are imprisoned and through which God must thrust his hand to reach us, but it wraps us around with his presence and breath and makes every atom and activity of nature his immediate free act. It is not denied that God can manage any machine he may make, but we feel closer to him and feel that he is closer to us without any such dead mass or lump lying between. God is imma-

nent in the world, and this pours his presence into every atom, or rather makes the whole world the immediate expression of his presence and purpose and power; then his providence does not simply touch the world at points or in spots, but fills and animates it throughout. In a similar way a spiritual view of the world makes room for the supernatural, which is God's extraordinary way of working and is just as easy and natural to him as his ordinary way and is only a variation of his regular habit. As nature is plastic to his every thought, being only the expression of his thought and will, he needs to stop no rigid machine or break or bend no inviolable law to accomplish some special purpose, but only needs to think and will it. The question of any particular miracle is one of historical evidence, but this view furnishes a plastic spiritual framework for such an event, and thus removes the philosophical objection to the supernatural that has played so large a part in attempting to discredit the Bible miracles. This spiritual view of the world is reflected in Scriptures, which as an Oriental book is idealistic in its modes of thought and expression, and is simply an exposition of the grand truth that "in him we live, and move, and have our being."

V. The human soul is of a different origin and

nature from that of the impersonal world. It is the offspring of God and is spirit endowed with personality. It is not therefore a phenomenon of God, as nature is, but it is reality in itself, having existence separate from God and a life that runs parallel with his. It is a germinal center of life, thought, sensibility and will, that develops into full-blown personality and lives a free moral life, ever rising into higher and fuller fellowship with God, or, through its own sin, falling farther away from him. God is thus the Father of man, and man is the child of God, and this is the fundamental relation that binds the two together. The unfolding of this relation into its possibilities of higher life or deeper fall constitutes the development and glory and tragedy of our human world, and projects itself into the world to come.[1]

[1] For a fuller discussion of the subject of this chapter, see *The World a Spiritual System*, Chapter IX.

## CHAPTER VII

### MAN

THE two fundamental factors in religion are God and man: and our view of man is as determinative of our theology as our view of God.

I. Man bears the image of God and is his child. As the top of the creation so far as we know it, he stands closest to the Creator and is likest to him in faculty and power. He is endowed with personality, and this fact at once lifts him above the level of nature into the rank of intellectual and moral beings, wearing the high crown of responsibility and character. The constitution of his soul is patterned after that of his Maker as this is imaged in the work of his hands. The world reflects the three primary powers of intellect, sensibility and will as constituting the fundamental nature of God, and these same faculties unfold in man. His mind grasps the world and reads it as a book, his sensibilities are swept with all rich and various emotion, and his will clothes him with a degree of sovereignty over himself and over the world. These

powers combine into personality, of which conscience in the highest office and crown, resulting in a character that is either the glory or the shame of man. Standing in the center of creation man mounts into dominion over nature, putting his foot on the earth, seizing the stars in his hand, and shooting his lines of thought and purpose out through the universe. He is thus a reduced copy of God and parallels him at every point. This divine sonship of man makes him a wonder to himself and leads us to exclaim with Shakespeare, "What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god!" and with the Psalmist, "Thou hast made him but little lower than God, and crownest him with glory and honor." This high view of man is one of the central columns of religion, without which it would fall into ruin. Low views of man invariably throw religion into the dust.

II. The divine origin of man still leaves open the method of his creation. The Scripture speaks in general terms, describing the end and result of the process, but leaving room for any length of time and number of links in the process itself. The modern view generally accepted by both scientists and theologians is that man came into being

through a process of evolution. His body is related point by point to the forms next beneath him in the animal world, and the converging lines of evidence that genetically connect his body with the long ascent of life are strong. Differences of view as to the method of this ascent divide scientific men, but they are practically unanimous as to the ascent itself. It takes little thought or insight to see that this method of developing the human body does not in the least interfere with the divine presence in the process. Evolution is simply God's way of doing things, and it no more excludes him from the development of a race than it does from the growth of an individual animal or man. And there is no special difficulty in thinking that man's soul was derived through the same process. God is in it all, and the process and the result are not less his because he chose to act through long time and slow stages rather than through a single short step. As President Strong says, "Though man came through the brute, he did not come from the brute, but from God." Man's divine heredity is untouched by this process, and it is still true in the light of modern knowledge that "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

III. The question of the original condition of man is a difficult one. Human history does not go back so far, and science can afford little trustworthy light by attempting to project its imagination back to primitive man. The Scripture represents man as coming from the hand of God in a state of innocence from which he fell by his own act. All considerations confirm this view. We cannot think of a holy God creating a sinful child, or starting a race loaded down with an evil heredity. In so far as man was connected with the animal race, he was not contaminated with evil, for there is no moral evil in the animal world, which lies below the moral level. Nevertheless, man started off with animal powers and passions which called for moral control, and this was just the point where he fell. He was innocent as he came into being with the light of reason and conscience, however dimly this light may have glimmered in his soul. He stood upright on his feet with the power of knowing and doing the right; but when the pressure of evil suggestion was put upon his senses he yielded and fell. "God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions."

IV. Man is a growth. The first man was as essentially human as is the man of to-day or as the greatest man that ever lived; but through how long

an education has man passed, how much has he grown? He did not start with our knowledge and civilization: he was endowed only with the possibility of these and had to work them out for himself. God made man as an outline sketch, as a germ or bundle of latent powers, and left him to fill out the sketch, to develop the germ and unfold himself into the blossom of his glorious achievements. If we wonder why God did not set man up with a full outfit of knowledge and civilization, morals and religion, the answer is that this would have robbed him of his greatest opportunity and kept him in childhood. Besides, character, the crown of the human soul, cannot be created and put on from without, but must grow up within as the product of experience. The centuries are the milestones of man's progress as he has fought his way forward and climbed upward to his present summit of attainment. The Gospel itself was brought in at the point where man could use it as the means of his highest victory.

V. The sonship of man implies the Fatherhood of God. The two states are complementary and necessarily go together. Man is son because God is Father. Fatherhood is an eternal nature rooted in the divine constitution, and when God was moved to create he could not help but express his Father-

hood. The divine Fatherhood is therefore as universal as human sonship. As all men are sons, so God is the Father of all men. It is true there is a distinction at this point among men in that all of them are by nature in a state of sinful rebellion, and some of them refuse to come out of this state into restored fellowship with the Father. This wilful alienation does not destroy sonship, but it does break off or impair its conscious exercise. It is the sonship of man that draws out the Father's love and sacrifice for redemption in the gift of his Son. Salvation itself is the development of man's sonship into the fulness of its growth and fruitage in a perfected divine image and blessed service and glorious attainment. It is this sonship, also, that insures a final immortality of fellowship with the Father. Though man may have grown as a fine blossom on an animal stem, yet as a gardener snips off the blossom and takes it into his home and leaves the stem in the ground so God may leave the animal stem to perish but takes his human blossom into his own bosom.

# CHAPTER VIII

## SIN

When we pass from the consideration of God to a view of the world he has created we are at once confronted with an unexpected and terrible fact: sin. We would expect to find a fair world of pure harmony and holiness; but we find one all torn with discord and stained with evil. This staggering fact is the mystery of the world, and out of it emerge some of the deepest problems of theology.

I. The origin of sin is the first difficulty. This difficulty relates to both God and man. Why and how God permitted the entrance of sin into his pure world is a question that has ever puzzled the human mind. We would have thought that when evil came knocking for admittance into the universe God's shoulder would have been against the gate to prevent the dreadful thing from pushing through; but the gate was left free to swing on its hinges, and evil came in. The only light we get at this point is in the theory that this gate was the creature's own free

will and that to lock this gate would have been to destroy moral free agency and responsibility. God had to respect the creature's freedom even in the act of committing the first sin and ushering all its woe into the world. There is also a psychological puzzle on the side of the creature in its fall. We believe that God must have created the first moral spirits with a sinless nature: how did any sinful thought, impulse or tendency ever arise in that sinless nature? How did the first thistle ever come to bud on the rosebush of a pure soul? Evil was in the universe before this world fell fresh from the hand of God: how did it get started? And when the first tempter came to this world, how did he find in unfallen man any congenial soil in which to sow the seeds of evil? All these questions run beyond our ken, drop into depths below our plummets, and we can only rest on the general faith and fact: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

II. The nature of sin is another problem. There are explanations of sin that explain it away. All pantheistic theories of the world resolve it into the necessary activities and unfoldings of the one Absolute Being, and thus it loses all moral qualities. This view obliterates the distinction between good and evil and reduces all things to mechanical necessity. The views that sin is the necessary

condition and outcome of our finiteness, or of our sensuous nature, or of our evolution from lower forms, are also fatalistic in their nature and must be dismissed. When freed from the element of necessity they may contain elements of truth, but they are not the truth. The best view of sin is that it is selfishness. It is the choice of the self as the supreme end, which thus rebels against all higher authority and other interests; it converts the soul into a sponge, absorbing everything into itself, instead of leaving it a fountain, flinging forth its streams upon others. Prof. Samuel Harris resolves sin into four forms of selfishness: self-sufficiency, instead of faith; self-will, instead of submission; self-seeking, instead of benevolence; and self-righteousness, instead of humility and reverence. It thus erects itself in rebellion against God and man at every point of contact. Of course there is a proper and necessary self-respect and self-love, and thus sin is the perversion of a virtue; but it is a perversion, and not the virtue itself. Every form of sin is seen to be a form of selfishness. Lying perverts the truth in the interest of self, sensuality perverts appetite for its own selfish indulgence, and avarice, ambition, vanity, and pride, are all the self absorbing the world. Even the more spiritual sins of unbelief and self-righteousness are affir-

mations of the self against the will and righteousness of God. Truth itself may be sought as a personal triumph and thereby becomes selfishness. Thus all forms of evil run down into selfishness as the taproot of sin.

III. The heredity of sin is another grave problem. Once the race had become infected with this virus it propagated itself down through the generations and breathes its blight upon every soul. It has always appeared to be a blinding blow to faith in the justice of God that human beings should be born with a nature or disposition that is sure to sprout into evil. Our relief at this point lies in the direction of the solidarity of the race, with its attendant good. Human beings are not independent spirits but units in a social organism, in both the good and the evil of which they must share. Through this channel they inherit the transmitted good of ancestors. The battles of the past thus become their blessings, the victories of other generations become their virtues. It is thus the race gets forward and climbs upward and accumulates a splendid store of capital. The price that must be paid for this blessing is its obverse in the load of evil the stream of heredity also pours down into posterity. But there are two modifications or checks to this obverse side. Evil is in a measure limited

to the third and fourth generation, it runs out or kills itself off, whereas good is unlimited and runs on cumulatively for "a thousand generations"; and heredity does not bind the soul in fatalism, but still leaves it with a measure of freedom so that no soul is condemned and lost for the sins of others but only for its own sins.

IV. The universality of sin is one of its most appalling aspects and problems. It shows its virulent presence and power in all ages, races, lands, and degrees of civilization and culture. It is the universal soil out of which grow all the wars, strifes, bloodshed, hatreds, vices and sorrows of the world. Every sincere and sane soul is conscious of it. Huxley saw the course of human history as an expanse of "infinite wickedness," and said, "The best men of the best epochs are simply those who make the fewest blunders and commit the fewest sins." Goethe said, "I see no fault committed which I too might not have committed," and Emerson said that to understand any crime he had only to look into his own heart. All human literature is powerful testimony to universal human sin. The purest motives are mixed with some tincture of evil. The holier one grows in his heart and life, the more sensitive he becomes to his remaining fault and unworthiness. This is the meaning of the doctrine

of "total depravity": not that any soul is totally depraved, but there is some mixture of evil in its purest states and moments.

V. The deserts of sin press its sharp point of guilt down into every soul and make sure its punishment. Every sinner feels his guilt, and his own heart condemns him. The universal human heart cries out in the anguish of its guilt and judgment. This judgment comes in this world in the retributive consequences that follow hard on the steps of sin. It lights up this world with a red glare of punishment in physical, civil, social, mental, and moral retribution, and runs on into the judgment of the next. Retribution has its roots in the nature of God and must work its way out in all the consequences of evil. This would not be a decent world without it, and were it annulled the world would rot in its own corruption.

VI. Yet sin is a curable disease, and over against man's sin is set God's redemption. While God permitted sin to come into the world he is doing all he can to put it out of the world. In this work he is necessarily limited by the freedom of the human will, but within these bounds he is exerting all power in heaven and on earth to overcome and cleanse and cure human sin. This is one meaning of the punishment inflicted on sin in this world,

which is primarily retributive and secondarily reformative and preventive. The Spirit of God is ever striving with man through his reason and conscience to bring him to repentance and pardon and purity. This also is the whole purpose of redemption, especially as it comes to its culmination in the Cross of Calvary, which is the supreme battlefield where God and sin met in the clash and shock of deadly conflict. Fools mock at sin, but the Son of God wept over it and sweat drops of blood to wash it away. So the black storm-cloud of human sin is lighted up and transfigured with the rainbow of divine Sacrifice, and shines with promise to the world.[1]

[1] For a fuller discussion of the whole Problem of Evil, see *The World a Spiritual System,* Chapter X, Section 3.

## CHAPTER IX

### NEED OF THE INCARNATION

We have now reached a point where the Father is confronted with a rebellious world. Is not this ground enough for religion? Is not a purely theistic faith sufficient salvation and worship?

I. The answer written broadly across all history is in the negative. The heathen religions, whether in their lowest degraded forms or in the purer forms of Greece and Rome, failed to cleanse the world and ended in degradation deeper still. Mohammedanism is a pure and lofty monotheism that has accomplished much that appeals to our respect, but it is a relentless cold faith, having closer kinship with a despot's sword than with a Father's sympathy, and it has hopelessly failed to meet the religious needs of man. It can create despotism and a desert, but not a redeemed world. Judaism shows us what monotheism can do at its best, and it did serve a temporary preparatory purpose in the development of religion. But it became a husk out of which the corn had been emptied, and is there

in the religious world to-day a more pathetic spectacle than its decadent impotence? And the experiment of monotheism has been repeatedly tried within Christianity itself. Unitarianism has risen time and again and attempted to gain a foothold as a form of the Christian faith. It has its organization and has had and still has men of the highest culture among its adherents. Yet it has never attained to any considerable degree of acceptance and power, and is an almost negligible quantity in the religious world to-day. The Christian Church in all its great historic forms has ever repudiated it as denying the essential fact and faith of Christianity. Long ages of human experience prove that theism is not religion enough for the needs of the human heart and of the world.

II. But theism itself contains the seeds and roots of Christianity. Christianity is not a foreign importation to the world of theistic faith and hope, but a further evolution. One truth always leads on to another, and thus all truths are linked together. When once we get hold of a true logical thread, if we pull it long enough it will unravel the whole web of the world. There are many striking instances of how one truth has thus been unfolded into immense and splendid consequences. Franklin put his kite up into a storm-

cloud and drew down a spark: men continued to pull on that thread and it unraveled into all the modern wonders of electricity. In a similar way evolution unfolded in many sciences, and democracy is transforming the governments of the world. Theism is such a germinal truth and contains within itself all possible truth, power and progress. Follow it out to its logical consequences and it will lead us straight to Christ and Christianity. This was the argument of Christ himself. "Ye believe in God," he said to his troubled and doubting disciples; "believe also in me." As much as to say: "Of course you believe in God: then believe also in me. If you believe in God, you must also believe in me." Christ is the logical completion of God. Follow God and we shall come to Christ. God is root and Christ is fruit.

III. For what kind of a God must we believe in? Only in a righteous and good God, a Father. Never will our faith in God reach a worthy and satisfying form until we know him as Father. All the instincts, yearning and practical demands of our hearts and lives reach up after and find a Father, and in his bosom only will we rest. Now what will a true Father do for his lost children in this world? He will come to them. We cannot believe that the Father will leave his children like

infants crying in the night and with no language but a cry. All earth's sin and sorrow will come up to his heart and pull upon his mercy and love until he hears and hastens to the scene. For a father is not content to send officers or hired agents to his lost children: he will go himself or send his own son to find and win and lead them back to his heart and home. If an earthly father will do this for his human children, how surely will our heavenly Father do the same and more for us. This is the great need in the world and principle in the heart of God that demanded and issued in the Incarnation. God himself came to the world in the person of his own Son. He threw off the veil behind which his face had been hidden from men and appeared in the flesh so that they could behold his glory, full of grace and truth. So Christ is in the world as the express image and brightness of God, to show us his face and let us feel the warmth of his heart and extend to us the help of his hand. The distance and coldness of a purely monotheistic God are thus removed, and he is brought near and made a warm and loving person and presence.

IV. And what will the Father in the person of his Son do when he is in the world? He will not be here as a mere spectator of its sin and misery,

but will lay hold of the world with all his power of hand and heart to roll it out of the ditch of sin into the light and love and fellowship of God. This means that he will come as a Saviour and work out the whole process of the world's redemption. He will come as a Teacher, who will kindle a great spiritual light so that men can clearly see the way of life. He will himself be a perfect Pattern of what men should be, sinless in his soul and full of all truth and grace, and he will himself take every step in the path of duty and service that he would have men take. But he will go much deeper than this in his work: he will gain the sympathy of men so as to lead them into faith in and fellowship with himself, bring them to a sense of their sin, and show them the mercy of the Father; and deeper still he will bear their sin as the great Sacrifice and atone for its guilt, laying down his own life for the life of the world. The processes of salvation that are illustrated in some degree in every case in which one soul saves or helps to save another, will come to their supremest expression and power in the Son of God, and his own blood will be the price of the world's redemption.

The Incarnation is thus seen to be, not an arbitrary and improbable doctrine, difficult to

prove and hard to believe, but a natural and logical consequence of theism. All the arguments that lead us to believe in God lead us on to believe in Christ. We are not introducing any new principle or taking an illogical step in passing from God to Christ, but are just following the same solid way that leads up to God. God is not complete without Christ. The Incarnation is the logical consequence of a lost world. This is the tremendous background of Christianity that raises an immense presumption in its favor at every point. It is the background of rationality and purpose that renders difficult truths easy of proof, and Christianity starts with this advantage. But we must now test this presumption by the facts.

## CHAPTER X

### THE BIBLE

At this point in our line of thought we may consider two of the means by which the Incarnation is manifested—the Bible and miracles.

I. The Bible is a human book. It was written by human authors in human language. Every line and word of it was originally scratched on parchment by pens held in human hands. There were many of these human authors, some of them known and others unknown, living in different ages and countries and writing in different languages. In writing these books they observed the common rules of grammar and rhetoric, and used the different forms of literature. Some of them wrote history, others poetry, others doctrinal treatises, and still others wrote letters. In this process of writing they were in normal psychological conditions. They were not in a trance or under any influence that took them out of their own proper consciousness and mental activity. In at least some instances they were

unaware of any special religious quality or value in what they were writing and never dreamed it would find its way into the Bible. Paul wrote to Philemon as any one of us would write to a friend, and it never occurred to him he was penning an inspired letter to be put in the New Testament. They wrote all of these books out of their own knowledge, or out of knowledge acquired through the use of human means. The historians used their own memories and written books and all other historical materials. The theologians used ordinary human logic in working out their doctrines and systems. The poets and prophets wrote and spoke out of their own imaginations, raised to a high degree of power. All their religious truth came to them through their own experience and was written out of it. Nothing was conveyed to them as though it had been dropped upon them from above out of another world, but everything grew up in their own world. Such mysterious doctrines as the trinity and the decrees of God all had their analogies in human experience. The Bible is thus a human book through and through. It grew up out of human conditions and in accordance with human processes. It is full of red human blood that pulses in all its arteries and veins. It everywhere tastes

of life. This human side of the book is a fundamental element in it, and is of immense significance and value. God could speak to us only in our own language, and hence he speaks to us in a human book.

II. The Bible is a growth. It was not written all at once, in one age or by one author, but was given "at sundry times and in divers manners." It is a great national literature that grew through the ages. The documentary roots of its early Hebrew books may go far back into Egypt and Babylon. From Moses, its first writer, to John, who probably wrote its closing page, its growth stretches through something like fifteen hundred years. Through all this long period it maintained a continuous history and development, adding book to book and doctrine to doctrine. Its history is a logical unfolding from the creation to the call of Abraham, where the general world history was narrowed to the point of one person and one people, down to the fulness of time when the hour struck for the Incarnation, and then through the dispersion of the universal religion out over the world. Its whole historical development is thus seed, trunk, branches, blossom and fruit. This historical development is accompanied with a corresponding moral and doctrinal development.

It starts with rudimentary morals and germinal doctrines. Private and social practices were at first permitted that were in time outgrown and pronounced out of date. The morals of one age became immoral in the next. The slavery and polygamy of Moses were condemned and swept away by Christ. Such doctrines as the trinity, divine Fatherhood, atonement and immortality, that existed only as seeds or germs in the Old Testament, in the New blossomed out into their glorious flower and fruit. God spoke to men in clearer words with larger meanings only as they were able to bear them. The light grew brighter as their vision grew keener. The early parts of the Bible were primers and first grade readers to lead the chosen people on to deeper views and loftier visions. Its first pages are dim in many doctrines that on its later pages burst into radiant light. This fact of the growth of the Bible plays an important part in its interpretation. It is not all of equal value, and we must distinguish between such parts as were local and temporary and are now obsolete, and such parts as are universal and permanent.

III. The Bible is to be studied. While its larger meanings lie on its surface and were plain to its first readers and are still plain to us, yet it

is subject to all the needs and processes and laws of human study. Its languages must be translated and interpreted. This process must be carried on in accordance with the laws of lexicography and grammar, just as any other book is interpreted. So also its history and customs must be investigated and reconstructed so that they will live in our imagination, as we reproduce any other history and life. Its doctrines must be studied from their first germ to their full blossom and final fruit. The whole of this work must be carried on under the strictest, most impartial and most thorough rules of scientific investigation. The sacred claims and character of the book cannot be permitted to draw around it any hedge of protection or throw over it any robe of privilege or favoritism. It cannot be put under a glass case and a warning issued to scholars and investigators not to touch this holy ark or shrine. It must come out into the open and expose itself to the most pitiless and even hostile search and test. Every fact in it must be put to the proof of the strongest critical acid and flame; no doctrine in it is so sacred that it must not go through the fire of investigation. Its own principle and bidding must be followed that we search all things and hold fast only that which is true. This study should not be hampered by any

anti-supernaturalistic presuppositions, and it should be carried on in a spirit of reverence and of sympathy with spiritual ideals.

IV. This study of the Bible has been going on through all the Christian centuries, but it has assumed scientific form mainly in the last hundred years. It has created a vast literature and worked out many solid and illuminating results. It has modified some traditional ideas. It has separated some books into composite elements and assigned some books and parts of books to other authors and dates than the traditional ones. It has thrown converging beams of light on the Bible from many sources and sciences, especially from history and archeology. Many modified or new interpretations of passages and texts, facts and doctrines, have been developed. The whole book in every part and particle of it has been subjected to the most searching criticism. Many of the more radical new views have failed to become established and some of them have passed away as individual theories or vagaries. Other modifications have won their way to general acceptance. Some of these accepted modifications at first created anxiety or alarm; but this has largely passed away as they have been better understood. No essential fact or doctrine of the Bible has been

discredited or impaired. The book stands to-day. in the light of the morning of the twentieth century on more solid foundations as the word of God, we believe, than ever before. Thorough study has not undermined it, but only confirmed it.

V. The Bible is a divine book. So far all has been human, but now we strike a divine element, a distinction that separates it from all other books and literatures in the world. It is true, there is a divine element in other literatures, but the divine element in the Bible is unique and unapproachable. It is not easy to separate and define this divine element, just as it is not easy to draw the dividing line between the divine and the human in providence and in our own consciousness. But it is there as a great outstanding fact, or as a flame that burns all the way through it, or as a relish that is found in all its pages. We see this divinity in the plan and purpose that shaped its history and unfold in the Bible from its first to its last page. We see it in the doctrinal development that proceeds from germ to fruit through all its growth. We see it in its great personalities, its creative geniuses, statesmen, leaders, prophets, and poets, who directed human history to divine ends and were mountain peaks that caught light from heaven. We see it with increasing clearness in

the Gospels and Epistles where this divine flame burns and its light shines out in purest splendor. We see its supreme manifestation and proof in Him who was the Light of the world and spake as never man spake. This guidance led these people in a way that is now plainly seen by us to be a divine plan and purpose; and this inspiration raised these writers, prophets and poets to a degree of illumination impossible to unaided human powers. The Bible is earthly clay fused with heavenly flame, human flesh filled with divine spirit. Its treasure is in an earthen vessel, but its treasure is divine. The breath of God is blowing through this book: nothing else will explain it.

This is the book God has given us as a medium and means of his revelation of the Incarnation of his Son and of his salvation. Every part of it is to be properly appreciated, its human and its divine elements, its growth and the processes of its study. In a wider sense it is all divine, for in all its parts it is just the book God developed through the ages and gave us for "doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

# CHAPTER XI

## MIRACLES

MIRACLES have ever been a storm-center of Christianity. They were attended with disputation and denial when they occurred, and controversy has ever since raged around them. Yet belief in them has not been overthrown, and they stand as a central column in the fabric of our historic faith.

I. The first and fundamental difficulty encountered by miracles is their relation to natural law. All advance in science extends the area of law, and this process has covered the universe and shown that it is a law-saturated system, in which no atom ever gets out of place, no star ever shoots a forbidden ray. Miracles at first sight look like "a violation of the laws of nature," and such a phrase was long a theological definition of miracles, as it still sets forth a popular conception of them. The growth and prestige of science have forced an abandonment of this view and have led to a reconstruction of the idea of the supernatural.

Many definitions have been given of it, but the general idea now held is that a miracle is an event in the physical world not explainable by known physical causes, which manifests purpose and is referred to the divine will. Viewed in this light a miracle escapes many of the old objections urged against it. The human will itself can cause events that are analogous to miracles. It can combine and direct physical forces to its own ends, and thus produce events in the physical world that nature itself would never have caused. God sustains the same relation to physical forces, only his control over them is more intimate and complete; rather these forces are simply his own will as directed by his thought, and thus immediately express his purpose. He can therefore combine and direct these forces to work out his purpose at any point without violating any law. But these forces themselves, or what we call the laws of nature, are the habits of God, and a habit can be modified when there is a reason for such variation. The immanence of God in his world makes it pliant and plastic at every point to express his purpose, and thus the supernatural is as natural to him as the natural. This modern philosophic view of the world completely undermines the old objection to miracles and brings them

within the curve of unbroken higher law and love.

II. The question of the reality of the Biblical miracles thus reduces to one of historic fact. This is a detailed study which cannot here be entered upon, but there are certain general considerations that may be indicated. A vital matter in establishing a historic event is its background of purpose. Does it fit into the general framework of history and fulfil a purpose as a key fits into a lock, or does it refuse to match other events and remain a refractory and irrational thing? This general principle bears strongly on the credibility of an event and is often decisive in itself. It is a knife that cuts up by the roots most of the alleged miracles that have infested the history of religion and that still occur in spurious forms of faith. But the supernatural element in Christianity bears this test in decisive triumph. There is a tremendous need and call for miracle in the world. Had it kept in the way of obedience and fellowship with God, possibly there would never have been any interruption of the ordinary ways of God in his providence. But sin—the true and only "lawlessness"—broke this harmony and separated man from God, blinding his eyes and so estranging him from his Father that he rebels against him at every point. Was there not need that God should

take some special step to reach fallen man, secure his attention and regain his confidence and love? This is the background of the Incarnation, itself the supreme miracle; and this also is the background of all the Biblical miracles: they are called for and justified by the fall of man and the need of his redemption. Sin has tangled up man's relations with God in such a hopeless knot that only the knife of a special intervention could sever it and straighten out its threads into harmony and peace.

III. All the miracles in the Bible fit in with this general purpose. They are comparatively rare, intervene at the right moments, and then cease. The idea that the Bible swarms with miracles is a mistake: they are really few in number, even when they are thickest, as in the life of Jesus. Miracles did not drip from his fingers, but he used them sparingly and reluctantly. The character of these miracles also is in keeping with their divine origin and purpose. They are never mere wonders or spectacular events, but are dignified and sober. Jesus never played the part of a sleight of hand performer, and the Bible is not a book of wonders. What men produce when they invent miracles is seen in the apocryphal lives of Jesus in which the most irrational and silly

things are ascribed to him, even as a boy. The miracles of Jesus are natural to him, in perfect keeping with his character and purpose, and flow from his hands as smoothly as his gracious words from his mouth. His miracles are essential parts of his teaching. Each miracle is wrought for a definite purpose, and this purpose is illustrative of his teaching and mission. He feeds the multitude, not only to appease their hunger, but also to lead them to the Bread of Life; and he opens blind eyes, not only to give sight to an unfortunate man, but also to show that he is the Light of the world. His miracles are so interwoven with the narrative of his life that it is impossible to dissect them out and retain its general web: when they are removed the whole narrative is slashed to pieces. The two great miracles by which he effected a unique entrance into and exit from our life are the buttresses upon which rest his divinity and work, and these will be considered later. The resurrection in particular is the central column that sustains his divinity and makes belief in all his other miracles easy.

IV. The question whether the miracles of Christ are essential to his divine character and mission and whether belief in his miracles is essential to Christianity is one that is constantly pressing

against us and is growing more urgent. The tendency to abandon miracles and hold to the divine character and work of Christ appears to be growing. But the Christian Church catholic has never been moved by this tendency, and still stands upon the rock of the resurrection of Christ, which carries with it his other miracles. Christ himself unmistakably claimed to have and to exercise miraculous power, and we cannot reject this claim and yet keep our faith in him; and if we take the miracles out of his life and out of the Bible the whole book will be so perforated with holes and be rendered so meaningless that it could not hold its place in our life. Such portions of the general Christian community, as the Unitarians, as have abandoned miracles sink into an insignificant factor in the religious faith and life of the world. Christianity itself would certainly be shorn of its power, if it were stripped of its supernatural elements, and be reduced to the impotence of natural religion.[1]

[1] For fuller discussion of miracles from the philosophical point of view, see *The World a Spiritual System,* pages 203, 290-293.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE PERSON OF CHRIST

THE Person of Christ is the central Fact of Christianity in which all its significance is concentrated and from which all its power issues. All the problems of Christianity and religion meet in him, and he is the solution of them all. The outstanding fact about Jesus Christ is that he cannot be viewed simply as man or purely as God, but can be construed and understood only as a union of both.

I. The humanity of Christ is seen in his human nature, consisting of a physical body and a rational soul. He was born of a human mother and grew through all the stages of infancy and childhood into manhood. In his body he was subject to all the conditions, appetites and experiences of the normal physical man. He lived under the limitations of space and time, and had and used the ordinary senses of men. He was subject to hunger and thirst and satisfied them with the same food and drink that other men used. He slept and

awoke, grew weary and sought rest, shed tears and smiled and swept the whole gamut of pain. In his mental nature he also exhibited ordinary human powers. As a child he grew in wisdom as he was taught in the home and school, and as he asked questions and looked with wondering eyes on all the world as it unfolded before him. His knowledge was limited, for he asked questions out of evident ignorance, was subject to wonder, surprise and amazement, states of mind that are possible only under limited knowledge; and he expressly declared that he did not know the time of the consummation of all things. His character, also, was subject to human conditions of growth and experience. He learned through obedience and was made perfect through suffering. He was subject to temptation, and all the evil suggestions that assail men beat against his soul, yet without any sinful yielding on his part. He lived a life of faith and prayer and constantly manifested his dependence upon and fellowship with his Father. Finally he was subject to death, and in an expiring cry committed his spirit into God. At every point Jesus Christ grew and lived as a man among men, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. In all of these respects his humanity was genuine, never an appearance or theatrical display. Any

view that denies, dissolves away or impairs this full and perfect humanity of Christ is untrue to Scripture and undermines the central fact of Christianity.

II. The divinity of Christ is equally with his humanity displayed and demonstrated in the Scriptures. Not only pre-existence, but his eternal existence with God is affirmed. Divine names are freely applied to him: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Christ himself accepted such names, and when Thomas addressed him as "My Lord and my God," he did not waive aside this supreme crown. The attributes of God are ascribed to him. He has eternal self-existence as contrasted with temporal created existence, he is immutable as opposed to changeful creatures, and he claims powers transcending space and time. "I am with you alway," he assured his disciples, and he is "the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Creation is ascribed to him: "All things were made by him." Omnipotence is in his authority and reign: "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth," and he is "the Lord God, which is and which was and which is to come, the Almighty." Superhuman knowledge is attributed to him in his earthly ministry, and omniscience in

his glorified exaltation. Equality with God is constantly ascribed to him and claimed by him. Words that would be terribly blasphemous or would indicate insanity if spoken by a human person, fall from his lips as though they were perfectly natural to him, and are accepted as such by his disciples and by all the world. Divine works are performed by him. In nature he upholds all things by the word of his power, and in him all things consist. He forgives sin and expressly declares that this is an exercise of divine power. He speaks to man as God, claims divine worship from man, and declares that he will judge the world. The whole New Testament is saturated with the divinity of Christ. We can scarcely read a line of it without encountering some act, statement or allusion relating to him that is absurd if he be conceived under human terms, and yet his Person retains its consistency and sanity and its hold upon the Christian world.

III. The fusion of these two natures in one person has ever been one of the profoundest problems of Christianity and must ever transcend our power of solving it. Yet we encounter such difficulties at many other points and are not dismayed by them. The union of the physical body and the rational spirit in a human person is a

similar mystery, and yet in this mystery we live and move and have our being. Futile attempts at solving the problem of the mystical person of Christ have resulted in almost every possible form of heresy. The divine nature has been denied, resulting in ancient and modern Unitarianism, and the human nature has been denied, resulting in the ancient Gnosticism. Other partial theories impair the perfection of either the divine or the human nature, and still others impair the perfect union of the two. The only doctrine that satisfies Scripture and holds the confidence of the Christian Church accepts both the divine and human natures perfectly united in one Person. He is perfect man and perfect God, and yet he is not two persons, but one and indivisible, having all the attributes and powers of both. Yet we are not without some light at this point. The kinship of human nature with God as his offspring is the ground of the possibilty of the union of the human with the divine. God did not take into union with himself a foreign and alien nature in assuming humanity, but spirit of like nature with his own. This union is effected by each nature imparting itself in some degree to the other. The divine nature is imparted to the human so that Jesus Christ the man had knowledge and powers which

he could not have had as a mere man. The divinity was in a manner latent in the humanity and only in a limited degree or occasionally gleamed through the humanity, but it was always there. In like manner, the humanity was imparted to and in a degree limited the divinity. One of the deepest mysteries in Scripture is the act and process by which the pre-existent Logos or Word did not hold on to or grasp his "equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men." In some manner and degree God emptied himself of his divine attributes and powers in Christ and reduced himself to human dimensions and conditions. This throws light upon the human limitations of God in Christ and enables us in some degree to understand this mystery. And yet it is only a gleam of light, and the Person of Christ must ever transcend our human understanding and be to us the great mystery of godliness.

IV. This complex personality of Christ fits him for the work of mediation between God and man in the work of salvation. His divine nature links him with God so that he understands him and can speak for him, and his human nature links him with man so that he can understand

and speak for him. In him God descends and man ascends and the two meet and are reconciled and forever made one. With one hand Christ lays hold of God and with the other he lays hold of man, and thus he brings them together. He brings God's light and love and forgiveness to man, and takes man's penitence and faith and obedience back to God. He is the Head of a new humanity, as Adam was the head of the old humanity, and causes it to grow up into his own ideal manhood and binds it to the Father in eternal fellowship. As in no other religion, the Founder is the religion, Christ is Christianity. All lines of faith and love and service lead to him, and from his work and fellowship all blessings flow.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE SINLESSNESS OF CHRIST

We come to the study of Christ as he was manifested in his human life, and at once are attracted by his sinlessness. Among the sons of men, all of whom, without exception, are more or less stained with sin, he only walked in white. He had the power to sin, and all the suggestions and allurements and storms of temptation beat against him, yet he resisted them and kept himself unspotted.

I. We may judge of his character at this point by the impressions he makes on various classes of observers. And, first, what impression does he make on us? His portrait is before us in the Gospels and other New Testament writings; we can still follow his steps, hear him speak, look into his eye, watch the development of his character, observe his behavior under the most diverse and trying conditions, and test him by all the standards we apply to our fellowmen. What is the result? He stands faultless and unique among men, severed

from them by the whole diameter of perfection. We see him grow through a beautiful infancy and childhood into maturity, and then live a life and display a character in which we can find no flaw. He is pure truth and trust, honesty and honor, righteousness and reverence, goodness and mercy and love, sympathy and service and sacrifice. No excess or defect, fault of omission or commission, evil disposition or temper, selfishness or sinister motive ever mars the splendid beauty of his perfection. He fulfils all human relations, passes through all experiences, is seen in joy and in sorrow, under the whips and stings of malice and in the agony of crucifixion, and yet he never loses his poise and balance, gives way to any ill temper, but is always pure sweetness and light. It is true that he shows indignation, but only such as is the expression of righteous wrath. As we watch this Man, there is nothing we would add to him or subtract from him, no criticism we would pass upon him, no finishing touch we could give to him, but we are lost in admiration of him as the one perfect and most beautiful personality in all the world.

II. He made the same impression during his earthly life upon his friends. His disciples were somewhat reluctantly won by him and drawn into

his companionship and were not prejudiced witnesses. During the years of his ministry they were constantly and most intimately associated with him. Master and disciples ate and slept together, walked in the same road and sailed in the same boat, endured the same hardships and enmities and persecutions. His disciples heard his public discourses and saw his works, and often did they commune with him in intimate private fellowship. They were full enough of failures and faults, strifes and quarrels themselves, and these they freely confess and set down in their writings, but they never record or hint at any fault in their Master. "We beheld his glory," says one of them, and another testifies, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." It is hard for a man to hide his faults from his intimate friends, and it has passed into a French proverb that "No man is a hero in the eyes of his valet." But these men gazed into the inmost private life of their Master, and yet never saw the slightest fault.

III. Christ stands the test of his enemies. The Jews soon became his malignant foes, watchful of every chance or pretense of finding some wrong in him, or point at which they could wound him, but their efforts were in vain. They brought charges against him in the Roman court, but their

own witnesses contradicted themselves and showed the falsity of the accusations. They made other charges that really redounded to the credit of Christ. Their sneer that he ate with publicans and sinners only showed his brotherly spirit with all men, and their allegation that he made himself "equal with God" was a true inference from the authority he exercised. Pilate, the Roman judge, who examined him with the keenness of a lawyer, "found no fault in this man," and Herod confirmed the verdict. Christ himself boldly demanded of his enemies, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" and none of them ever met the challenge. If these able and alert enemies could have found any flaw in this Man they would have pointed it out, but he stands in the intensest light of their malice without spot. Some modern critics of Christ have also essayed the task of finding flaws in him, but with no deeper insight or better success than their ancient exemplars. They have pointed to his anger, but a soul without the power of righteous indignation would be lacking in one element of manhood and would not command our respect. On the other hand, some modern skeptical scholars have joined in the eulogy of Christ as a perfect character. David Strauss, who reduced Jesus to the level of his

human kind, said that he had "a conscience unclouded by the memory of any sins," and John Stuart Mill wrote that "Religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this Man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity."

IV. Christ's own consciousness of his sinlessness is a powerful testimony to its reality. He had an exquisite sense of purity that has become the standard and ideal of the world; yet he never exhibited any sense of sin in himself. He led others into the presence of God and taught them to pray "Forgive us our debts," but he never included himself as a penitent in any such prayer. He showed the greatest horror of sin in others, but never of any in himself. Remorse never disturbed the perfect serenity of his spirit, no slightest shadow ever fell upon his own conscience and sense of peace with God. In challenging others to convince him of sin he asserted in the strongest terms his own sense of his sinlessness. If it be said that one is not a good judge of his own moral condition and that when one of our own number asserts his personal sinlessness we allege the fact itself as evidence of pride or blunted moral insight, the answer is that this is not true of the purest souls. As they increase in purity they grow more sensi-

tive to remaining sin, and the slightest stain on their souls gives them a painful sense of guilt. Christ is the whitest soul known in history on any theory of his being, and therefore his self-judgment must have been the most penetrating and exacting; yet in the unbiased light of his own consciousness he stood without sin.

V. If it be said that the portrait of Christ as a sinless soul is an imaginary one and need have no corresponding reality we must answer that the unlearned men that drew it were totally incapable of any such achievement. It is with great difficulty that a master of fiction can construct a character that maintains its inner consistency through manifold experiences, and these unskilled fishermen would have been the greatest literary geniuses ever known if they had accomplished such a task out of their imagination. They simply saw and told the truth with straightforward honesty and unconsciousness of inventive effort.

The sinlessness of Christ is a moral miracle that lifts him above humanity and is a mark of his divinity. It is one of his necessary qualifications as the Saviour of men; for only he who is himself without sin can deliver others out of their sin.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST

SINLESSNESS is the negative side of the character of Christ, and we now pass to its positive side.

I. His character is compacted of all virtues raised to their highest power and beauty. He was a perfectly normal human being. His body was pure in blood and bone and was developed into symmetry and strength and ruddy health. His mind unfolded fully into its faculties so as to give him a clear and wide grasp of truth, his heart was a fountain of all good and beautiful affections, desires, aspirations and motives, his will maintained masterful sway over all his powers, and conscience was the crown of his soul. This perfect personality flowered into all the virtues and graces of character. He was truth, for he looked at reality with unclouded vision and photographic accuracy and honesty, and he spoke and lived it so that he could say, "I am the truth." Tradition and authority, interest and prejudice, exercised no undue control over his mind, and

there was no misrepresentation, deception, or unreality of any kind or degree in him, no veneering or paint on him, but the polished surface of his beauty only showed the solid wood. Purity, patience and peace, truth and trust, honesty and honor, righteousness and reverence, goodness and gentleness, kindness and courtesy, mercy and love, sympathy, service and sacrifice—all virtues combined in him into a perfect disposition, the one flawless diamond and supremely beautiful character that ever appeared among men.

II. A striking and difficult feature of this character is its symmetry. Character is a complex and intricate construction and is easily thrown out of balance. It may be strong in one direction and weak in another, highly developed in one faculty or virtue and dwarfed in another, and thus be ill-proportioned and misshapen. It is comparatively easy to have one virtue or a few virtues: the difficult thing is to have all virtues in their proper proportion and symmetry. Christ stands supreme among men as the one perfectly balanced man, having all elements of character blended into harmony and making a full-rounded personality. This symmetry is especially seen in those elements of character that go in pairs and are complementary. Thought and emotion are two elements that

are apt to throw each other out of balance, one man running to abstract, cold intellectuality that chills his feelings, and another running to emotionalism that blinds his judgment and sweeps him off into uncontrolled action; but in Jesus these two elements were perfectly balanced: he saw clearly and he felt deeply, and his action issued from both brain and heart in one powerful stream. Jesus had intense convictions of his own, combined with patience and tolerance towards the differing convictions of others—a rare combination of virtues. He did not bear down upon those who differed from him in intellectual belief in a dictatorial and arbitrary way and crush them by sheer authority, but dealt with them patiently and gently. His sweet reasonableness was one of the most winning aspects of his character. Deep and intense convictions tend to bigotry and fanaticism, intolerance and persecution, but none of the disciples of Jesus ever caught this spirit from their Master.

III. There are many of these complementary virtues in Christ. Another pair is seen in his rich inner and his active outer life. His inner life grew in solitude, which is the mother country of the strong. He spent thirty years in private sequestered preparation for only three years of

public service. Often during his ministry he retired into the mountains for prayer. Yet he was no recluse, but threw himself out into the world and was a man among men. He mingled freely with all sorts and conditions of men and knew them on their farms and in their cities, in their markets and fishing boats, in private friendship and in fashionable society, and he thus combined deep inner meditation with outer activity into a full-orbed and fruitful life. Still another pair of complementary virtues were his deep vision of the evil of the world and his jubilant optimism. He looked through the world and saw all its evil down to its lowest depths of sin and shame; and yet he seemed strangely untroubled over all its poverty and corruption, sin and sorrow, pain and mystery. He walked through the world with a serene soul and rejoiced in spirit. He was the most jubilant optimist that ever lived. His secret was this: he saw that the world was bad but that it could be made better. He looked not at what it was so much as what it might be and would be; and then he threw himself into the work of making it better, and the joy of this service and sacrifice scattered the mists of pessimism and shed around him the brightness of faith and hope.

IV. There are complementary virtues that are

still more difficult of combination; they even appear antagonistic and impossible of reconciliation. Among these we must place justice and mercy. Justice grows stern and insists on its demands, though it seem to crush mercy; and mercy grows indulgent and is in danger of overriding the necessities of justice. Jesus solved this difficult problem. He combined an ardent hatred for sin with an equally ardent love for the sinner. His pure and sensitive soul turned from sin with the deepest abhorrence, yet he always manifested a wonderful depth and delicacy of tenderness for the penitent sinner. He wept over Jerusalem, yet he yearned to gather its children under his forgiveness and love. To be uncharitable and vindictive towards the faults of others is itself one of the greatest faults, and Jesus was perfect at this difficult point. That he might be just and yet the justifier of them that believe, that God might be holy and yet merciful, was the object of his mission and the ground of necessity for the Cross. So, also, Jesus combined the opposite and somewhat contradictory virtues of meekness and manliness, of gentleness and courage, of tenderness and might. The passive virtues were almost unknown or were depreciated and despised in the ancient pagan world. Proud Rome had no respect

for meekness and gentleness, but was quick to repel any real or imaginary offense and reveled in blood. Jesus was gentle as a child and tender in his touch as a woman, and he taught the doctrine of turning the other cheek to the smiter's hand; yet never was there a manlier man or a braver soul than he. Lightnings leaped from his indignant lips to smite hypocritical Pharisees. He faced the soldiers sent to arrest him with such calm bravery, such dignity and majesty, that they fell before him as though he were earth's greatest potentate. His followers in so far as they have caught his spirit have never been weaklings, but strong men as ever trod the earth, the knightliest among the brave, who have stood before kings and hurled despots from their seats.

In these and in many other points, such as self and others, this world and the next world, Jesus combined complementary virtues into balanced harmony and unity, and thus he is the one perfect pattern of humanity, "the fairest among ten thousand and the one altogether lovely."

V. A striking feature of the character of Christ is its universality. Every human being is born and grows within the envelope of his age and race and country, and never wholly escapes these limitations. A man of the first or tenth or fifteenth

century could not get his head up into the twentieth century; and a child of an oriental race cannot become occidental in instinct and temperament, a Japanese or Turk cannot become a German or an Englishman. Heredity stamps itself upon every atom of the blood. An American everywhere bears with him the marks of his nationality, and a Jew is a Jew down to the last fiber. However enlarged in his knowledge and sympathies and cosmopolitan in spirit he may become, no man can break away from and fling off the shell in which he was born; grow as he may, try hard as he will, it will cling to him and at points bind him still. The nearest approach to universality is seen in men of genius, such as Homer and Shakespeare, who produce works of art that have general circulation in the world. But even these men are circumscribed in their range, and their works must not be carried too far from home or they will lose their audience, or time will render them obsolete. Jesus was the universal man. It is true that even he had some marks of his age and race upon him. His human knowledge was that of his time, and he was a son of his race. Yet he also overleaped all these boundaries and limitations. Though he sprang from the Jewish people, yet he is not a Jew, and the world

is hardly conscious of his race. He is the Son of Man, the typical and representative, the ideal and perfect man, who is equally at home among all the sons of men. His character has none of the peculiar marks or qualities of any particular race, but has that breadth and balance, poise and power, that make it the model and paragon of all races: it is compounded of all virtues and graces mixed and blended in perfect proportion. And so age can never wither him or custom stale his infinite variety. He speaks only on universal themes, in immortal words that will never grow old. His teachings meet and satisfy the religious demands of the twentieth as of the first century and can never lose their perennial music and charm. He draws the men of every race to his side in affection and trust, devotion and service. Compared with him the greatest geniuses are local characters and parochial schoolmasters. He looms over all the world as the one universal man who represents and typifies the race, and is at home in all ages and lands and among all peoples.

VI. But what is the central principle of his character, its total aspect and outcome? He has been described from various points of view. A favorite theory has been that he was the Man of

Sorrows and his religion has been characterized as the Religion of Pity. "For the natural virtues of the Greeks," says Friedrich Paulsen, "Christianity substitutes a single new one: pity or mercy." Renan went to the other extreme and painted Jesus as a young Galilean peasant with an opulent genius for geniality and joy. Thus one extreme construes Christ's character in terms of asceticism, and another in terms of estheticism. Such portraits are fragments of the truth, but not the truth. No one of these traits was central in his life but was rather an incidental aspect, the scenery through which he passed as he pressed on to the end. The total aspect of his life as portrayed in the New Testament is that of holy power. "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with power." He had a single masterful purpose in life, to do the will of the Father in saving men and establishing the kingdom of righteousness and peace on earth. This purpose compacted him into unity, compressed all his energies into one stream, and moved him with unyielding and irresistible might towards one end.

Thus all the elements of the character of Christ combine to make him the Strong Man of the world, who "cometh glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength, mighty to save."

## CHAPTER XV

### THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF CHRIST

THERE are transcendent elements in the consciousness of Christ, which must be considered in our study of his personality. While these elements soon pass beyond our apprehension, yet we can discern their outlines as they are manifested in his human life. Christ himself constantly assumed, frequently displayed and occasionally asserted such transcendence, and any construction of his person that leaves this fact out of view is fatally deficient and faulty.

I. In his consciousness Christ transcended nature. We cannot solve the problem how this transcendence emerged in the human consciousness of Jesus, but we see traces of its growth, and his baptism when the Spirit descended upon him and he heard a voice from heaven declaring to him, "Thou art my beloved Son," seems to have marked the hour when his divine consciousness came to its full-blown flower or burst upon him as a mighty revelation. Then it was that he went into the wil-

derness to meet his great temptation. The first temptation was that he should use his power over nature for his personal end in turning stones into bread. The whole point and power of this temptation lay in its appeal to his consciousness of transcendence over nature. If he had not been conscious of any such power there would have been no temptation in the suggestion. He knew he could transmute stones into bread and fling himself unharmed from the pinnacle of the Temple, but he resisted the thought because such action was not in accordance with his mission and the Father's will. All of his miracles were exhibitions of his power over nature. And thus the consciousness of Christ penetrated nature and subjected it to his will.

II. Christ in his consciousness transcended man. Early in his ministry "Jesus did not trust himself unto them, for that he knew all men, and because he needed not that any one should bear witness concerning man; for he himself knew what was in man." These words are interpreted by some commentators as only describing his deep and intimate knowledge of human nature, but they appear to go beyond this and imply the divine knowledge of man which Jesus frequently exercised. He knew Nathanael before he met him,

disputing with Pharisees "he knew their thoughts," and he "knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who it was that should betray him." Such passages as these are plainly intended to describe something more than a shrewd insight into human nature. As the consciousness of Christ broke through the barriers of nature, so it passed the borders of human minds and enabled him to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.

III. The consciousness of Christ transcended sin. He saw through the nature of sin to the depths of its vileness and guilt and abhorred it as no human soul ever hated it. He saw it as a deadly knife slashing all the tissues of life and as a stab at God himself. He was able to classify and grade sins according to their true nature and degree of guilt, and his catalogue and condemnation of sins were very different from the conventional judgments of men. The penitent woman taken in adultery he dismissed with a few kindly words, but his lips flamed with fearful judgment against the spiritual sins of self-righteous Pharisees and scribes. These Jewish doctors of divinity had drawn up catalogues of fictitious sins of their own manufacture and had perverted all true judgment of right and wrong; but Jesus

trampled upon their false distinctions and defined and condemned the real sins that offend God and destroy men. Jesus mounted into still higher transcendence of sin: he forgave it and thereby exercised a divine prerogative. When he said to the palsied man, "Son, thy sin be forgiven thee," the scribes exclaimed, "Who can forgive sins but God only?" They were right in their theology, but wrong in their application of it. When Jesus spoke these words and other words of like import he mounted the judgment seat of God.

IV. Christ transcended humanity by exercising lordship over it. All through his ministry he assumed and asserted such lordship. He commanded all men to believe on and follow him and promised them eternal life. He made himself the standard and test by which all men shall be judged: to believe on him is eternal life, and to believe not is eternal death. In his great picture of the final judgment he himself sits upon the throne and before him are gathered all nations; and he sends men to the right or to the left according as they have or have not served him. In this august relation he transcends all human powers and declares himself to be Lord of all.

V. In his consciousness Christ transcended space and time. These are two of the most abso-

lute barriers against which our finite powers beat. Try as we will, imagine as we may, we cannot escape from these envelopes. Mathematicians construct theoretical higher dimensions, but as a matter of experience they are confined within three dimensions as rigidly as the most illiterate peasant. Jesus does not certainly appear to have transcended space during his ministry, but after his resurrection he passed into solidly inclosed rooms and appeared to have been released from the boundaries of space. His transcendence of time was still more manifest. The eternity out of which he came at times overshadowed him and enwrapped him in its folds so that he had moments of universal consciousness. "Before Abraham was," he calmly said, "I am." The words were so monstrous to the Jews that they threw stones at him, but Jesus "was hidden" as though he had melted out of sight. The words were monstrous in their delusion, or else they were words of truth.

VI. Christ in his consciousness transcended all finite being and was one with God. "No one knoweth the Son, save the Father," he said; "neither doth any know the Father, save the Son." In these words he lifts himself quite out of the class and condition of men into absolute fellowship with the Father. The Father knows him with the

omniscience of God, and with equal insight and intimacy does he know the Father. He thus makes himself as unique and absolute in his knowledge of God as God is in his knowledge of his Son. This was an immense thing for Christ to say, either showing himself insane—and no one ever thinks of him as unbalanced—or else lifting him to the level of God. And this is not a single exceptional statement of his deity. Such flashes and glimpses are properly few, but they are decisive. "O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." "I and the Father are one." These are not hyperbolic or poetic statements, but are calm words of soberness and truth.

These statements and views as to the transcendence of Christ are necessarily figures and symbols "thrown out" at a truth that shoots away from us into the infinite; but they none the less convey to us glimpses of reality that must enter into our view of Christ. We cannot psychologically construct or imagine such a consciousness, but neither ought we to limit the transcendent by our finite thought. The Lord Jesus Christ, true man as he was and acting at times and points under the limitations of humanity, yet transcended these limitations and is one with the Father.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST

HAVING seen how Christ was constituted for his mission in his divine person, character and consciousness, we now take a rapid view of him at work.

I. A long preparation preceded his short ministry: thirty years of comparative solitude for three years of public service. He grew in body and mind, in the home and school and synagogue and carpenter shop, and thus acquired human strength and wisdom for his task. Even the Son of God did not rush untrained and ill-prepared into his work, but took plenty of time, passed through thorough discipline and got ready. The meteor travels through millions of invisible miles gathering momentum for its brief flash of splendor, and the long hidden years of Jesus prepared him suddenly to shine forth as the Light of the world.

II. His baptism marked the point of his entrance into his public work. This ordinance was a divinely appointed sign of entrance through

repentance and consecration into the kingdom of God. Jesus submitted to it, not because he needed repentance for any personal sin, but because he was the representative of sinful men and because he became obedient unto all divine appointments. He did not come into the world simply to show men what to do, but to go before in the path he would have them follow; and so he never asked them to do anything which he did not first do himself. By his baptism he publicly entered into the kingdom, and thus opened the way for others to follow. Thus he began his ministry by accepting a religious ordinance. There is danger in such ordinances, the danger that the outer form of the ceremony will constrict the inner spirit of religion, but religion must have some ordinances, as the water must have the cup to hold it. Jesus set his seal upon religious rites at the beginning of his ministry, though there never was a greater foe of ritualistic religion than he. His submission to this ordinance marked the moment when his consciousness flowered into a sense of his divinity and the Father set upon him the seal, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Had Jesus not gone down into the baptismal water, he never would have come up under an opened sky with the Holy Spirit streaming upon

him, and God never would have pronounced him his Son. But he faithfully obeyed his humble duty, and it blossomed and bore these wondrous heavenly fruits.

III. From his baptism Jesus was hurried off to his temptation in the wilderness, so sudden and violent was the change in his spiritual weather. This temptation was the logical consequence of his experience at his baptism. Seized and overwhelmed with the mighty consciousness of his divine power, he was confronted with the alternative uses to which he might put it. When fasting had set afire every fiber of his body with hunger and thirst, the suggestion that he should turn stones into fresh, fragrant bread fairly made him wild with the fever of desire. A tremendous strain was thus put upon his consciousness of divine power to turn it to his own personal comfort. Had he yielded to this first suggestion, the temptation would have carried him over the precipice of the right use into the chasm of the wrong use of his power, and he would have lost his life in seeking to save it. But he withstood the strain and saved himself and thereby saved his work and saved the world. Jesus came out of that wilderness wearing the crown of self-mastery, captain of his own soul and destiny. Only he who thus saves himself in

the hour of trial can save others, and Jesus opened his ministry with this supreme trial and triumph.

IV. From the temptation in the wilderness Jesus returned to Galilee where he opened his ministry in Cana with the miracle of turning water into wine. This first miracle was typical of all his miracles. It was not wrought as a mere wonder to excite astonishment or to attract attention to himself, but as a work of beneficence. It is true that it "manifested forth his glory," but not as a sensational wonder: it showed his command over natural agents and his willingness to use his power for beneficent ends. All his miracles, excepting only the withered fig tree, were works of mercy in which he ministered to human needs. Such works necessarily created sensations, but Jesus himself endeavored to allay such excitement and to keep his miracles in the background. He used them only sparingly and refused to play the part of a mere wonder-worker. They were exhibitions of his deeper power to save; they made manifest in the outer physical world what he could do in the inner spiritual world. In their beneficence they were in keeping with his whole nature and mission. They flowered out of him as naturally as leaves out of a tree or as blooms out of a rosebush; he emitted them as easily as a

dynamo emits sparks; they came from his heart and showed his central nature of power sheathed in love. And thus Jesus never worked miracles for their own sake, but only as means to his higher end of working greater miracles in the spiritual world in the salvation of men.

V. The chief work of Jesus was to lead men to penitence and bind them to himself in faith and fellowship. He endeavored to start it inside the Jewish Church, which was the divinely appointed preparation for his mission, the root that should have flowered into his person and work. But "he came unto his own, and his own received him not." He soon met with a chilling reception in the Jewish Church, then with suspicion that grew into hostility and burst into furious hatred that bore the scarlet blossom of his blood: this was the terrible failure and crime of the Church, this shows into what depths of sin and guilt the Church may fall. And so Jesus left the bigoted and rebellious synagogue and the proud, hypocritical temple and went out into the highways and byways of Judea, into the wilderness and mountains, to the seashore and into the fishing villages, and preached to the people. He made no distinction among the people he sought, and talked as freely to a disreputable woman down in Samaria as to the influential and

proud Nicodemus up in Jerusalem. Hated tax-gatherers, beggars, outcasts, adulterers, had as easy access to and warm welcome from him as the rich and fashionable. Sometimes he preached to great throngs crowding the vast amphitheater of the seashore, but more often he talked to a few people in private, and with him one soul was a great audience. His aim was to get into the inner life of each hearer and possibly touch the sore spot hidden there, and then lead him to penitence and faith, forgiveness and healing. He did not measure results by the multitudes that thronged around him, but by the few whom he drew into his fellowship, filled with his Spirit, and enlisted in his service.

VI. His chief work narrowed down to the training of a few chosen disciples. It is remarkable how many things we think important Jesus did not do. He did not go to Jerusalem, build a great tabernacle seating five or ten thousand people and hold immense meetings that would stir the city and land. He did not write any books or publish any sermons; he never wrote anything but a few words in the sand and was quite careless of what became of his words, committing them to the vagrant winds. But he did choose a few select men and gave himself for three years to

the work of training them and filling them with his Spirit. He poured his mind into them and set them on fire with his burning ideas until they had his vision of a redeemed world and flamed with love for God and for himself and for man: then he sent them out as glowing coals to set the world on fire, as seeds to fertilize it. History has justified his method. Jesus Christ has thus repeated and multiplied himself down through the centuries and is to-day leavening the world. He planted a kingdom that is an organism, budding and expanding with the enormous and endless self-propagating power of life. And so his kingdom comes and shall come until his will is done on earth.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE TEACHING OF CHRIST

JESUS CHRIST is the supreme Schoolmaster of the world. "A Teacher come from God" he was pronounced by a great Jewish doctor of divinity, and the centuries have accepted this verdict and turned the world into his amphitheater in which the nations are listening to his gracious words.

I. We are struck with the manner of his teaching. It was artless, simple, sincere, coming as a living stream out of his own experience, appealing to the experience of his hearers, and throbbing with sympathy and earnestness. The scribes and Pharisees were the official teachers of his day, but they were droning away on dry themes, technical points in an artificial theological system of their own invention, and the people had grown weary of their speech. The teaching of Jesus came to these hearers like a fresh breeze in the sultry, stagnant, stifling atmosphere, or a shower of rain on parched ground. He spoke on the subject of religion as a living matter and made it

as real and vital as fishing or farming. His words were the common words of everyday speech, yet they bore a new weight of meaning as they came home to the business and bosom of his hearers. The deepest note of his teaching was his reality; it carried with it its own self-evidencing power. He was not simply repeating traditional doctrines that were long since outworn and dead, but was speaking that he did know and testifying that he had seen. It was this directness and reality of his teaching that led the common people to hear him gladly and officers to exclaim, "Never man spake like this man."

II. The general characteristics of his teaching also strike our attention. He taught with authority, but not with the arbitrary authority of official station. The authority that clothed his words was that of inherent and self-evident truth. His words were their own witnesses and needed no official claim or station to confirm them. His teaching was also marked by universality. While speaking directly to the people of his own time, yet he was equally speaking to the people of all time. His subjects, however personal or local, were yet universal in their range and application. The smallest matter in his hands became great. He kept clear of trifling local and temporary affairs,

and dealt only with the large matters of the human soul. Especially did he keep his teachings clear of human opinions that have become obsolete. The teachings of any ancient author, Plato, Aristotle or Cicero, are obsolete in many a page because they contain views that have long since been left behind by the progress of human thought. Science has put them in a pitiable plight, except as specimens of earlier stages of human development. But none of the teachings of Jesus are thus out of date and left behind. His words are ever abreast and in advance of the age, for they express universal truth; and still stands true his sublime saying, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

III. Passing on to the substance of Christ's teachings, we may group them under two main heads; they form a curve sweeping around two foci. First, Christ revealed God and brought him to man. God was known in the world, but Jesus threw a great beam of light upon his character and his relation to men that marked an epoch in the religious history of the world. All previous revelation and knowledge of God were dim morning twilight compared with this sunburst and noonday splendor. Jesus set God in the light of his own pure and intense holiness and revealed the rich beauty of his

character as it streamed through his own soul. He revealed God as the Father. This name was known before, Old Testament prophets had uttered it, but it swelled into new depths and tenderness and music as it came from the lips of Jesus. The old views of God as an oriental despot or blind and relentless fate melted into this universal and loving human relation. This brought God into kinship and fellowship with man; and as Jesus illustrated this divine Fatherhood in his own person and life he enormously illuminated and enriched the world with this teaching. Yet he also set God upon his throne as King, and the Kingdom of God was a central fact in his teaching, the phrase occurring in the Gospels more than one hundred times. This brought God into the world as its ruler and made his will, not an arbitrary and despotic, but the wise and loving law of life. Amidst the anarchy and ruin wrought by sin in this world he is erecting a new kingdom of righteousness and peace into which he is gathering all redeemed loyal souls.

IV. The other focus around which swept the teaching of Jesus was man. He set forth three main facts about man: his infinite worth, his lost condition in sin, and his redemption. Jesus put a new evaluation on man in a world in which he

was held cheap. Man had been owned as a slave and sold as a commodity, but when Jesus exclaimed, "How much then is a man of more value than a sheep!" he overstrained language with the burden of his meaning and lifted man to a higher level of worth than he had ever before attained. This new appraisement of man has gone deep into history and raised human worth all over the world. Yet no teacher had ever seen the depth of sin into which man had fallen as Jesus did. He not only condemned the more open and flagrant sins of men, but also tore off their masks of hypocrisy and respectability and exposed their inner and secret sins of the spirit, often more deadly than the sins of the flesh. But he saw sin only to have mercy on it and to offer to the sinner his forgiving and cleansing grace. He taught that God only can forgive sin, and then he himself exercised this divine authority. However deep a man had fallen and hopeless seemed his degradation, Jesus could lift him out of his pit and throw open the door of God's mercy wide enough to let him come back and be cleansed. He wrought out a process of redemption that is sufficient to forgive and cleanse the sins of the world. And his final picture of the redeemed portrays them fully restored to the image of God and

ushered spotless into his eternal fellowship in glory.

V. The unique feature in the teachings of Christ is that they all converge upon himself and derive their power from his person. In this respect he stands entirely apart from other great ethical teachers, who simply unfold the truth to men and bid them to believe and practise it. But the message of Jesus was, not, Believe this truth, Follow this path, but, Believe on me, Follow me. The truth he taught had been taught by other teachers, at least in its scattered rays: he not only combined these rays into one unbroken beam of light, but also concentrated and embodied them in his own person so that he could say, I am the truth, I am the light. Jesus himself is the Gospel he came to preach; he came, as Dr. R. W. Dale said, not to preach the Gospel, but that there might be a Gospel to preach. It is not truth that moves us so much as personal power. The great personalities of history are its mountain peaks that pour down their streams of life upon us. Jesus Christ is Prophet, Priest and King: truth and light, mercy and love, forgiveness and salvation, all issue from him in streams that redeem the world. The teacher is always greater than his teaching, and this is supremely true of the divine Teacher who is himself his greatest message: his truth is

our trust, and his love is our life. This is why in the Epistles of the New Testament there is so little use made of the teachings of Christ recorded in the Gospels. No allusion is made to the Sermon on the Mount or the parables which we think are so splendid and vital. Hardly ever is Christ quoted, but his person is adored; the reflected light is disregarded because the gaze is fastened on the Sun; his sayings are forgotten, but Christ himself is all in all.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE CROSS OF CHRIST

We have come to the summit and climax of redemption and are on its holiest ground. In its ethical and spiritual significance Calvary overtops all the mountains of the world, and is the central magnet of Christendom. The Cross gathered into its burning focus all the converging rays preparatory to redemption, on it the work of Christ culminated in its greatest intensity, and from it bursts the full splendor of the Light of the world. Its importance is amply appreciated in the Scriptures. The Old Testament gleams with it in sacrifice and prophecy, and in the New it is the dominant fact and doctrine. Its shadow fell on Jesus almost from the beginning of his ministry, with increasing definiteness and fulness he spoke to his disciples of the coming tragedy, about one-third of the whole amount of matter in the four Gospels is devoted to the events connected with his crucifixion, and after his ascension, while his life almost drops out of sight, his death, together with

his resurrection, blazes up into the supreme luminous fact of the Gospel. We remember the great men of the world by celebrating their births, but Jesus asked to be remembered by his death, and this is the event that is commemorated in the most sacred and vital ordinance of his Church. The profoundest efforts of Christian thought have been given to the study of this fact, but we never can fathom the depths of its mystery and can only catch glimpses of its meaning; standing on this ground we can only touch the hem of Christ's garments, dyed in his own sacrificial blood. By successive steps let us endeavor to ascend this mountain.

I. Christ died on the cross as our example. He was a martyr to truth and duty. He did not die an inevitable death as the result of disease or accident or fate, but laid down his life as a voluntary act; and he went to his death because he would not accommodate his kingdom and teaching, spirit and purpose, to the attitude and aim of the Jewish hierarchy. Had he yielded to their demands he would have escaped the cross, and might have become their leader and a popular hero. But he would not sacrifice or modify truth and righteousness to save his life and paid the price of his devotion with his blood. In pursuing this

course he trod the path that every soul loyal to truth and duty should follow. "For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps." The Christian centuries have been tracked with the blood of those who thus followed Christ, and the same duty rests on us. It is true that this cross has been lightened of some of its bitterest sufferings in Christian lands, but there are still places in which it costs blood to follow Christ. And even in Christian countries there is often a call for sacrifice and suffering in obedience to truth and duty. Business, politics, social life are yet often unfriendly and hostile to the Christian spirit, and loyal souls must often pay a sore price. Christ still needs and demands disciples that will follow him in suffering. Most of us bear suffering badly. We yield to the world rather than meet it with unflinching face, or we cry out under it as though it were harsh treatment from the Father. In invincible devotion to truth, in patience and submission and forgiveness on the cross, Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example.

II. Christ died to show us the love of God. We know and measure the love of others by what they do for us. It is thus the children know the love of their parents, the scholars of their teachers,

the patient of the physician, and the country of the soldiers that die for it. Man often shows great love for his brother man by laying down his life for him. The same test must apply to God, and if he loves us we have a right to inquire what he has done as an exhibition and proof of his love. Many are the manifestations of his love, but the supreme one is that "God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." The gift of his Son that he might enter our humanity and be subjected to all its humiliation and suffering and taste the bitter agonies of death was an act of love for us on the part of God infinitely transcending any proof of love we can ever give or receive among ourselves. In the Cross of Christ God has opened his heart and let us see its great bleeding wound; and after a true vision of that Cross we ought never to doubt his love for us and should evermore be filled with love for him.

III. Christ died on the Cross as a vicarious sacrifice for our redemption. The principle of vicarious sacrifice is woven into the whole web of the world. Nature itself is full of it. Everything is there laid on the altar of sacrifice that it may be transmuted into something higher. The rocks crumble into soil, the soil sprouts into plant

and flower and fruit, the fruit passes into the life of the animal, and the animal into the life of man. Our human world is red with the baptism of sacrificial blood. We are members one of another so that all must suffer together and one for another. The strong must suffer for the weak, the good for the bad, and the innocent for the guilty. The mother suffers for the child, the righteous father for his wicked boy, and the soldier for his country. The blood of all the past generations has become our blessing; their battles are now our victories, and their pains our ease. We can rarely help another in need unless we are willing to suffer for him; and the degree of our suffering will measure our healing power. Vicarious suffering has a strange chemistry by which it inspires the weak and disheartened with courage, comforts the penitent and sorrowing, and melts hardness of heart into contrition and submission. Whoever would enter into other lives in healing ministry must carry with him and apply this balm. Life everywhere costs life, and whoever would redeem it must pay this price. God himself cannot escape this law, and its supreme manifestation is the Cross of his Son. The whole life of Christ was the crowning fulfilment of the law of sacrifice that runs as a scarlet thread

through the universe, and his Cross was the point where this thread is most deeply dyed, dipped in his own blood. He came into the world as a soldier to fight against sin and lay down his life on its field; as a teacher to lend all his wisdom and gentleness and patience to dull earthly souls that they might begin to see with his eyes and catch the vision of God and a better life; as a physician to put all his skill and healing virtue at the service of sin-stricken souls, and bring them into penitence and give them pardon, cleansing and peace; as a Saviour to give his life for the redemption of lost men. He fell into his grave as a precious Corn of Wheat, and out of that sacrificial seed is springing the multitudinous harvest of saved souls.

IV. There is a still deeper substitutionary element in the sacrifice that Christ fulfilled in his life and death. One who would heal or save a fellowman cannot achieve his deliverance by standing off from him in aloofness and superiority, but must go down to his level and insert himself into his condition and identify himself with him, and then he can gain his sympathy and lay hold of his heart and lead him back into newness of life. The typical illustration of this law is the father who would save his ruined son. If a father were to wrap himself in his respectability and refuse

to admit his son into his presence or even to recognize him, he would have no power to lead him to penitence, but would only embitter him and drive him deeper into degradation. The father must go to that son, acknowledge his parental relation to him, take upon himself the burden of the boy's shame, suffer for and with him and thus identify himself with his son: then he will have redemptive power and can melt him into penitence and lead him back into a new life. Every human saviour must thus insert himself into the condition of those he would save. Sending tracts through the mails into the slums of cities will not avail to redeem those districts: city missionaries and settlement workers must go there and live with those people, and thus they may gain their confidence and lift them into a better life. God fulfilled this law also. He did not simply send us messages from heaven, but he sent his only begotten Son into the world, who emptied himself and became flesh, "taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea the death of the Cross." In his incarnation Christ thus inserted himself into our humanity and identified himself with us at every point, that he might

bear our sin, suffer for and with us, and thus redeem us from all iniquity.

V. But we have not yet reached the deepest point of this union of Christ with man. He was not simply one man more in this world, who suffered as a martyr for truth and as a manifestation of the love of God for us and a vicarious sacrifice for human welfare. Other men have done this on a wide scale and with fruitful results. But Christ is unique as the Son of God. As the Logos, or Word, or second person of the Trinity, he is the Creator of the world and Fountain of humanity. "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that hath been made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men." While, then, Christ in his human nature grew out of humanity, yet humanity grew out of Christ in his divine nature. Humanity is thus the organism or body of which Christ is the head. This original union of Christ with humanity has never been broken, though it has been impaired by human sin. He is still immanent in humanity as its divine ground and is over it as its Lord. He is therefore the Head and Representative of humanity, and stands responsible for it before God. God deals with Christ as he would deal with man himself. By virtue of this federal relation Christ is the

representative Sacrifice, who bears the consequences of human sin, and the representative Penitent who stands smitten before God and utters his sublime Amen to God's penalty. We are here getting close to the heart of this mystery where we can only bow our heads in faith and awe.

VI. One step further we can go: the Cross of Christ satisfies God. Whatever God does must satisfy his nature, otherwise he would not do it. The Cross of his Son satisfies his whole nature. In particular it satisfies his love. A father, seeing his son in the way of sin and ruin, cannot be content to let him go on in his way, but is impelled by all the affections and motives of his heart to go out after him and do his utmost to reclaim him; and such sacrifice, however costly and painful it may be, satisfies his fatherly love. The same satisfaction is experienced in the heart of God as he pours out his life as a sacrifice for the redemption of his lost human children. And the same sacrifice satisfies his righteousness. It is the express and repeated teaching of Scripture that "God set forth" Christ Jesus "to be a propitiation, through faith, by his blood, to shew his righteousness, that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that believeth." It is a legal, ethical and psychological principle in our own personal

and social constitution that sin should bear its penalty and that righteousness demands it. Our own hearts are not satisfied in the presence of guilt until we know this demand has been met. This ineradicable element in our constitution is a faint shadow of the infinite righteousness of God, who cannot look upon sin with any allowance and can be satisfied in his own nature only when its guilt has been expiated. The sacrifice of his Son as the Representative of man meets all the demands of justice and satisfies his holy righteousness. "God is eternally satisfied with the suffering of love for sinners and desires that it may take the place of all other suffering for sin."[1] But it is his own mercy and love that provide the sacrifice, so that in the Cross of his Son "Mercy and truth are met together; Righteousness and truth have kissed each other."

The doctrine of the atonement has been stated in commercial terms of purchase and sale that have made it repellent to many minds. The justice of God has been represented as vindictive vengeance. But such mercenary terms and barbarous motives have no place in this doctrine. The Cross of Christ is the working out of the same principles in the heart of God that are experienced

[1] W. N. Clarke, *Outline of Christian Theology,* p. 348.

in the fatherly human heart. God must suffer for and with his children in order to redeem them and yet vindicate and satisfy his own nature, and he has experienced this suffering from the beginning of human sin. The Cross on Calvary was only an outcropping or momentary glimpse of the inner and eternal atonement in the heart of God, a reflection of "the Lamb that hath been slain from the foundation of the world." This is "the great mystery of godliness" by which He who was manifested in the flesh was "justified in the spirit." We cannot go closer and pluck the heart out of this mystery, but we see far enough into the heart of God to respect and reverence his righteousness, marvel at his mercy, trust his grace and praise his love.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF CHRIST

We now come to the two great miracles that are the buttresses on which the arch of Christ's life stands: his virgin birth and his resurrection.

I. The virgin birth has encountered special opposition, not only from those who reject all supernaturalism, but also from those who admit other miracles in the Gospels. The supposed scanty evidence for it is one reason for this reluctance to accept it, but this hesitation appears also to be due in some measure to the apparently tremendous presumption that lies against it. Human generation through two parents is such a universal and persistent fact that it seems hard for some minds to believe that this line of descent has ever been interrupted with a virgin birth. All miracles, however, are equally easy to omnipotence, and the virgin birth is no more unique an exception to the general course of physical events and calls for no greater power to produce it than a resurrection. And the fact is not so exceptional and extraordinary

as it may seem, for through the lower portion of the scale of life parthenogenesis or virgin birth is common. "As for virgin procreation," says Prof. Huxley, "it is not only clearly conceivable, but modern biology recognizes it as an everyday occurrence." This fact and teaching of modern science should go far towards removing any special prejudice against this miracle.

II. The Scriptural evidence for the virgin birth of Christ is not extensive, but it is definite and positive and very weighty. Mark passes over the entire period of Christ's life up to the beginning of his public ministry, and John also, after setting forth the pre-existence of Christ, opens his account of the earthly life of Christ with his appearance at John's baptism. The fact that it did not fall within the plan of the writers of these Gospels to record the virgin birth does not imply their disbelief in it, for the same silence would imply they did not believe Jesus was born at all. Matthew and Luke record the virgin birth, with important differences. Matthew evidently tells the story from the point of view of Joseph. He relates how Mary was betrothed to Joseph and the sore perplexity Joseph was in when he discovered, before the formal marriage had taken place, that Mary was with child; but while he thought on these things an

angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and told him not to fear to take Mary as his wife, "for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." These were facts that could have been known to Joseph alone, and therefore this version of the affair must have come from him. It is equally evident that Luke's version tells the story from Mary's point of view, and gives facts that could have been known only to her. He narrates the visit of the angel to the virgin Mary after her betrothal to Joseph and his revelation to her that "the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God." Mary was greatly troubled at first with the revelation of the angel, but at length she said with beautiful submission, "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."

III. Examination of these narratives discloses strong evidences of their credibility. They are integral parts of the Gospels in which they are found and bear no marks of being interpolations. They cannot be dissected out of these writings without leaving gaps that impair their completeness and consistency. The narratives are remarkable for their simplicity, candor, modesty and

evident truthfulness. They are not poetical or mythical in style and spirit, but are words of soberness and honest conviction. Their authors were competent and trustworthy men. Luke was a physician, which implies special competency to judge of this fact, and he tells us in the preface to his Gospel that he had derived his materials from those who "from the beginning were eye-witnesses," and that he had "traced the course of all things accurately from the first." The narratives themselves contain facts of such a personal and private nature that they must have come from the inner circle of the holy family. These were people of primitive faith and piety, belonging to that group of humble but devout Jews who were "looking for the consolation of Israel," and these portions of these Gospels bear the impress of this class in their simple and archaic style. These stories were evidently told by godly Jews whose saintly souls were steeped in the pietistic spirit of the Old Testament. They did not tell them as wonders of which they were proud, but as mysterious realities which had happened in their experience. We cannot tear these narratives out of the Gospels without mutilating and discrediting them. They bear the inimitable marks of honesty and truth.

IV. There are no definite references and only veiled allusions to this fact in the other books of the New Testament, such as Paul's statement (Galatians 4:4) that "God sent forth his Son, born of a woman." Much has been made of this silence as though it implied ignorance of or disbelief in the virgin birth. This inference is not well founded. Paul makes little reference to the life of Christ or to his teachings: the Person and Cross and Resurrection of Christ fill his vision; it cannot be inferred, therefore, that he did not know of or believe in the ministry of Jesus. The silence of the Acts and Epistles as to the virgin birth, which at first looks so ominous to faith in this fact, admits of a perfectly natural explanation; in fact, this silence is just what we should expect. The virgin birth was not a public event in the life of Jesus and was not preachable. In its very nature it was a private and sacred fact, not to be proclaimed from the housetops. In this respect it stands at the opposite pole from the resurrection, which was and is a public fact to be blazed abroad among all men. The virgin birth was not a central support of the whole Gospel, as the resurrection was and is. We do not think belief in the virgin birth is now essential to faith in the Gospel; in this respect it does not rank with the resur-

rection, though if this birth is a fact, as we believe it is, it is certainly of great importance. But it is for private faith and is not preachable, and Paul did just what we would expect him to do and what we do when he passed it by in silence in his public ministry.

V. It is difficult, if not impossible, to account for the presence of this narrative in the Gospels on any other theory than its historic truth. There was no definite prediction of such a birth for the Messiah in the Old Testament, and the Jews had no such expectation. The Jews themselves would not have invented any such theory, for with their intense regard for the honor of the marriage relation a birth out of wedlock was abhorrent to them. The story could not have got into their writings from heathen sources, for such a story from such an origin would have been to them doubly abhorrent. It did not grow up as a myth, for there was not time for this, and it bears no marks of such origin. Its presence in the narratives is inexplicable, except as a fact.

VI. The fact of the virgin birth is introduced into this book at this late point because the main ground for faith in it is Christ himself. While the virgin birth in a degree supports the divinity of Christ, yet in a larger degree the divinity of

Christ supports the virgin birth. Thrust this miracle at us the first thing and we may shy at it; but it is easy to believe in it after we believe in him. If it is not necessary to explain, it at least is congruous with the sinlessness of Christ, and it matches his whole character. It is fitting that the Son of God should have a unique entrance into as well as a unique exit from this world. The Church laid hold of this fact in its earliest creed, and all attempts to dislodge it from the faith of Christendom have failed; and for these reasons we still believe in Jesus Christ, our Lord, "Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary."

## CHAPTER XX

### THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

THE resurrection of Christ is the rock on which rests the central column that sustains the whole structure of historic Christianity. Remove this foundation, and the entire fabric falls into ruin. Paul himself staked the whole Gospel upon it: "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." No resurrection means no Christ, but a risen Jesus means a divine Lord and mighty Saviour. Around and against this rock the waves of criticism have rolled and surged for centuries. No other event in history has been subjected to such thorough and keen investigation. The ablest intellects have supported or attacked it, and the most impartial and pitiless light has been poured upon it. An enormous literature has grown up around it. Yet it stands unmoved and shows no signs of disintegration.

I. The event was forced into the light at the time it occurred. There are miracles recorded in the Bible that happened in obscure conditions.

They derive their support from the general web of divine history in which they are woven, and little or no individual evidence could be adduced for them taken singly. The resurrection of Christ stands on a very different basis. This thing was not done in a corner, but took place in the full light of day, under a blaze of publicity, and is supported by many witnesses and converging lines of proof. The New Testament is saturated with the consciousness of the strategic position and critical importance of this fact, and pours around it a flood of light such as illuminates no other event in the Bible.

II. The Scripture evidence for this fact is abundant, definite, consistent, competent, trustworthy, convincing and conclusive. It is narrated in all of the four Gospels, with such differences as might be expected from accounts that are more or less independent and fragmentary. The scholars find some difficulty in fitting the narratives smoothly together, but this is probably due to the fact that some of the pieces are missing, and something also must be allowed to individual points of view. There is no doubt that Jesus Christ was crucified, dead and buried. Three days after his burial some of the devoted women went to his tomb expecting to find his body and prepared to anoint it, but they

were amazed to find the tomb empty, and presently they saw Christ himself. Five different appearances of the risen Christ on the day of the resurrection are recorded: first, to Mary Magdalene early in the morning near the sepulchre; second, to the other women soon after in the same place; third, to Peter in the morning; fourth, to two disciples on the way to Emmaus; fifth, to the assembled disciples, except Thomas, in an upper room in Jerusalem in the evening. Six later appearances are recorded, making eleven in all. These witnesses were numerous and competent. Altogether they numbered more than five hundred. The eleven disciples were with Jesus during his ministry and had become familiar with his form and features and voice and knew him as a friend. They were men of good ability and sound judgment; not learned men, it is true, but practical business men whom it would not be easy to deceive on a matter of fact. They saw Jesus crucified and dead on the cross, and buried in his tomb of rock, sealed up with a great stone. On the third day after his burial they testify that Christ appeared amongst them and was with them for a period of forty days. During this time they were frequently with him and conversed with him, and used all tests to assure themselves of his actual

personality and presence. This is a body of testimony that is competent to establish the reality of this event.

III. The most remarkable fact about these witnesses is that they were not expecting a resurrection, at first disbelieved in it themselves, and were convinced of it only after the most searching investigation and tests and the most indubitable proofs. The most generally accepted and plausible theory adopted by those who reject the reality of the resurrection of Christ is, that his disciples, under the influence of their passionate devotion to him, came to have a subjective vision, illusion of delusion, which led them to believe that they had seen him. But this theory is rendered psychologically impossible by the state of their minds Such visions or illusions can grow up only in minds that already have some obsession or prepossession in their favor; they demand congenial soil and propitious circumstances. Nothing of the kind but quite the contrary existed in the case of the disciples. While Jesus had spoken to them of his resurrection, yet they seem not to have understood him, and no such expectation was in their minds. His death was a disaster totally unexpected by them and was instantly followed by the utter collapse of all their hopes. They had trusted that

Jesus was he who would redeem Israel, setting up an earthly kingdom with Jerusalem as its capital and themselves in its chief offices, but his crucifixion was a death-blow to any such hope and smote them into the dust. Bewildered and blinded by this cruel disappointment, they thought that all was over. It was as impossible that a vision or illusion of a risen Christ should suddenly grow out of this state of mind as that a rose should grow out of a rock, or light shine out of darkness. Not only so, but when their Lord was reported risen they refused to believe the story and pronounced it an idle tale. Their unbelief mockingly said to them:

> Ye poor deluded youths go home,
> Mend the old nets ye left to roam,
> Tie the split oar, patch the torn sail:
> It was indeed an "idle tale"—
> He was not risen!

These disciples themselves were the hardest of men to convince of this fact. Thomas held out in his unbelief for eight days and was persuaded only by a physical demonstration. These facts render subjective illusion impossible, add immense weight to the testimony of the witnesses, and put this event on solid ground.

IV. A witness in this case of special directness and weight is the apostle Paul. He was a man of

genius and scholarship, who has left his mark on the ages, and from every point of view is one of the great minds of the world. At first he was a bitter enemy of Jesus Christ and was trying to stamp his name out in blood. He repeatedly tells us the story of his conversion at which Christ appeared to him revealed in a burst of heavenly splendor. This was within three years after the death of Christ, and after three years passed in meditation Paul went up to Jerusalem and spent fifteen days with Peter and James, the brother of Jesus (Galatians 1:17-19). What did these men talk about during those two weeks? Specially about the resurrection of Christ, we may be sure. Thus within six years after the event, Paul, having had a personal experience in which he believed he saw the risen Christ, investigated the facts as to his resurrection on the ground in company with eye-witnesses; and he tells us these facts in an epistle the genuineness of which is undoubted. Does not this take us back close to this event and give us indisputable testimony? In another undoubted epistle Paul gives us a detailed list of witnesses to the fact of the resurrection, adds his own testimony, and solemnly asserts that "if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false

witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not" (1 Corinthians 15:1-20). Here is a man of great ability and logical mind, a trained lawyer, a man of lofty character and distinguished services, one of the great figures of history, who virtually puts himself on oath and with a solemn sense of his responsibility to his own age and to coming ages swears to the reality of this event. How many events, even of historic significance, can produce such testimony?

V. These witnesses all acted out their belief in this event. Plunged into utter despair by the death of Jesus, they at first gave up all as lost. But suddenly within three days these scattered and fleeing disciples were transformed into masterful men, and began to preach with irresistible power that their Lord was risen. Persecution instantly arose, and they bore their testimony at the risk and cost of life itself. Yet they persisted in declaring their knowledge of this fact and not one of them ever retracted it. Finally, they sealed their testimony with their blood. Only one of the disciples escaped a violent death. They were put to death because they testified that Jesus Christ was risen from the dead. Men will die to main-

tain a fact they know to be true, but they will not die to maintain an alleged fact they know to be false. The tremendous revolution that came over these disciples and clothed them with such mighty power and the solemn seal they set to their testimony are explicable only on the theory that they told the truth.

VI. Historical events gather credibility from their environment. They must fit into the facts of their time and be of a piece with the general web of events to which they belong. If they are unrelated to such events and refuse to match them they are thereby discredited, or rendered difficult of proof; but if they bear the same relation to their environment as a key to a lock, their proof becomes relatively easy. The resurrection of Christ is a key to the great lock of history and of divine purpose in the world. The ages prepared the way and grew into readiness for it. It was the outcome and climax of a great plan that was foreshadowed in prophecy and developed in history. The redemption of the world is a goal that calls for special means and justifies extraordinary events. Granted that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son to redeem it, his resurrection from the dead as a link in the chain of this redemption becomes logical and natural. The

resurrection is the logical completion and glorious crown of the Cross, without which the Cross would have been final defeat. Torn out of its place it would be hard to prove, but in its place it is seen to be worthy of belief. If this event were offered to us as a mere wonder we might reject it; but as part of a glorious plan we are constrained to accept it. The character of Christ is also a guarantee of this event. That such an One should be bound of death and cast as rubbish to the void would put all our theories of the world and of God to intellectual confusion. It was a perfectly natural and fitting thing for him to burst asunder the rocky jaws of the tomb and come forth in the fulness of life. It would be hard for us to believe this of others, but it is easy to believe it of Him.

VII. History matches this event. The literature of the New Testament issued out of it. The Gospels, Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles have on them the marks of evident competency and honesty. They were written, not for controversial purposes to prove a theory, but as the natural expression of a belief and a life. Questions of the genuineness and integrity of these documents are important, but the case does not rest on these matters. This literature did not create

belief in the resurrection, but belief in the resurrection created this literature. These books are simply straws in the wind which show which way it is blowing, or they are bits of literature floating on a deep and powerful current of history that came flowing out of this event. Not only these books issued from this fountain, but the whole Christian movement and all these nineteen centuries of Christian history. The Gospel ran around the Mediterranean shore, undermined the Roman Empire, toppled over the whole outworn fabric of the ancient world, and breathed into humanity a new spirit that has shaped all our modern ideals and institutions. Christendom is a mighty monument that requires an adequate origin and cause, as certainly as the great Mound at Waterloo, or the Arch of Titus in Rome. Something happened back there on the first Easter morning that is great and powerful enough and divine enough to account for all these consequences, and this event and cause we believe was nothing less or else than the resurrection of Jesus Christ. On this rock we rest our faith to-day, and on it is rising the Kingdom of God in the world.

The judgment of Dr. Thomas Arnold, a master of historical inquiry and author of the *History of*

*Rome,* may be held as pronouncing the verdict of impartial investigation when he said to his boys at Rugby: "The evidence of our Lord's life and death and resurrection may be and often has been shown to be satisfactory. It is good according to the common rules for distinguishing good evidence from bad. Thousands and tens of thousands of persons have gone over it piece by piece, as carefully as ever judge summed up in a most important cause. I have myself done it many times over, not to persuade others, but to satisfy myself. I have been used for many years to study the history of other times, and to examine and weigh the evidence of those who have written about them, and I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort than the great sign which God has given us that Christ died and rose again from the dead."

## CHAPTER XXI

### CHRIST IN HISTORY

"By their fruits ye shall know them." Doctrine must be tested by deed, character by conduct, personality by power. Christ himself issued this challenge and must abide by its verdict. Nearly nineteen hundred years have passed since he left the world: what has become of his claims and prophecies, has promise been matched by performance, how stands his case in the world to-day? History has a way of burying the dreamers of a day and their little dreams, but dreamers of the ages and the seed-truths of the world push their way up through the centuries and dominate all time.

I. The unique and tremendous fact about Jesus Christ, severing him broadly from all his human kind, is that he has always been regarded by his followers as being still in the world. Other great prophets of humanity have lived their lives and then dropped into their graves; and while their teaching and influence survived for a time, yet

their personal presence had vanished, and with it much of their personal magnetism and power, as the queen of beauty withdraws her loveliness with her into the tomb, and the singer in her death hushes forever all the magic melody of her song. But Christendom has never thought of Christ as gone. He told his disciples that he would be with them alway, even unto the end of the world, and there has ever been with his followers a Presence they have felt as the fulfilment of this promise. Christ has thus perpetuated his personality in the world and been a living factor in all its unfolding events and centuries. Death, that retires all other men, only ushered him more widely into the world. His death was his birth into humanity, and all subsequent history has felt the throb of his Spirit and the shaping power of his hand.

II. The Gospel of Christ was introduced into the world at a trying time. In some respects the conditions for it were propitious. Judaism had ripened and gone to seed in its husk, heathen religions were outworn, and the world lay at peace under the mighty shadow of Rome; and these conditions gave the Gospel an opportunity. But in other respects the soil for its reception was stony and thorny. Outworn religious faith had degenerated into general skepticism, scoffing irre-

ligion and hopeless and bitter pessimism; the fibres of morality and character had broken down into pleasure seeking, sensuality, cruelty and brutality; and the civil power was becoming a despotism unchecked by law or reason. The result was a condition of society surpassing in degradation and shamelessness anything known elsewhere in history. There was a polished surface of wealth and culture, but beneath it was a seething hell. Upon this soil so rank with weeds and thistles the Gospel was sown, into this boiling caldron it was cast. What chance was there that it could survive, take root and grow? Yet with almost incredible speed it ran around the Mediterranean shore and planted itself in every strategic city and center. Quietly and unobtrusively it spread among the common people and the very slaves, and then presently it began to work its way up among the cultured classes and into the palace. At length it attracted the attention of the ruling powers and excited the hostility of pagan priest and Rome emperor. Persecution broke loose, and there was a fearful struggle between the old faiths and the new. Time and again the power of the pagan empire endeavored to wipe out Christianity with its own blood. Sword and fire swept through the ranks of believers, but they only multiplied the more. The

Colosseum, the very seat and center of pagan pride and pomp and cruelty, drenched its arena with the blood of Christians. But gentle forces are ever the mightiest, "the meek shall inherit the earth," and in three centuries a Christian Emperor sat upon the throne of Rome, and everywhere its banners flew above the eagles the symbol of the Cross. The battle of early Christianity with pagan Rome is one of the most magnificent spectacles of history and has excited the wonder of infidel historians hardly less than that of believers. Gibbon taxed his genius to explain it, and Renan declared that "Jesus Christ created a paradise out of the hell of Rome." This initial battle and victory was prophetic of his triumphant march down through the ages and out over the continents by which He has been crowned victor of the world.

III. Christ has been a creator in every field of civilization, and the impress of his hand is on all our ideas and institutions. In religion he is supreme among the prophets of humanity. His teaching was cast as a seed of monotheism among all the naturalisms, polytheisms and pantheisms of the world. The face of God struggling through the murky vapors of human superstition was distorted into many perverted shadows, which were dark with cruelty: Christ swept these away

as with the beams of the rising sun and let the face of the Father shine through in its true form and features. Even the monotheism of Judaism was narrow, hard and cold as compared with the warmth and tenderness of the Fatherhood Christ disclosed and illustrated. Corresponding with this revelation of the Father was Christ's teaching as to the childhood of man and his brotherhood. This introduced new ethical conceptions as to human worth and social relations that entered as profound and powerful creative forces into the world. As contrasted with Jewish and pagan cults that were so largely ritualistic, Christ created an ethical and spiritual religion entering directly into the heart of man and flowering out in all his character and conduct. Especially did he put his own Person in the center of his religion and draw his followers into vital union and fellowship with himself. Thus Christ has reconstructed the religion of the world and produced a universal ethical and spiritual faith and worship that stands supreme among all the religions of humanity. The ages have not displaced him from his transcendent position among the founders of religions, and in the morning of the twentieth century he stands unapproachable and practically unchallenged.

IV. Christ has been a creator in the political

world. While in his teaching he did not deal directly with political affairs and refused to complicate himself with Caesar, yet he did lay down principles that were deeper than all politics and necessarily in time reshaped them into accordance with his spirit. Government, while a divine ordinance, is also a human device subject to human adaptation. The various types of government, despotism, oligarchy, monarchy and democracy, have all been useful and justified in their proper time. Some of these are necessary in earlier and lower stages of human development, and others are blossoms that grow higher up on the tree of history. Christ's fundamental doctrines of the worth of man and of human brotherhood necessarily worked against the lower and towards the higher forms of government. He taught the essential equality of men in their primary rights and duties, and thus let loose a powerful stream of democracy that undermined despotism and monarchy, toppled over the thrones of tyrants and kings, and laid the foundations of our modern republics. His Spirit of righteousness and peace has been a dominant factor in shaping the fabrics of our modern governments. It is true that these governments still generally bristle with bayonets and are loaded down with heavy armor, but war

is a waning factor in our world, and all the forces of our Christian civilization are silently working against it. The most powerful figure and force in all the capitals of Christendom, if not in all the capitals of the world, is Jesus Christ.

V. Christ has been a creator in the moral and social world. His Spirit of humanity grappled with the cruelties of the ancient world and delivered it from its awful bondage. It was his hand that stopped the flow of blood on the arena of the Colosseum, emptied its vast amphitheater of its maddened multitudes, and carved on its ruined wall the Cross. He turned that "hell of Rome," on which "disgust and loathing fell," into a world of order and decency. His hand reached through the centuries and rescued woman and children from bondage and struck the shackles off the slave. In the Roman world the father had absolute right over his children and slaves, even to kill them at his pleasure. Woman was a chattel of her husband, as she is to this day in India and Africa. The spirit of Christianity was the atmosphere in which these cruelties died as malignant germs die in the sunlight. White slavery was rendered impossible by Christian ideals of manhood, and the same spirit in time worked its way out to its logical end by giving the black man equal freedom

with the white. As black men in this country bow in gratitude before Abraham Lincoln, so should all freed slaves in the world gather around the feet of Jesus Christ, for he is the real author of their liberty. The Spirit of Christ is also pervading our whole civilization and searching out its sins. The social evil, once everywhere open and shameless, is now under the ban and is being treated as one of the great sores of the world. Intemperance is being restricted and driven into ever narrower quarters. Political life is being purified, and business itself is being transmuted into brotherhood. The same standards of character and conduct are being required for man and woman, white and black, politics and business, private and public life. The religion of Christ insists on entering into and controlling all life, and there is no corner or secret chamber from which it can be shut out. His presence may be invisible, but he is really at the polls and in the market, in the home and at the fashionable social function, and more and more is he dominating all our life. The fact that the world is still a scene of sin and wickedness and that even the Church and all Christians are painfully imperfect, no more discredits Christ than the sunlight is discredited by the mire on which it falls, or the

white lily blossom by the swamp out of which it grew.

VI. Christ is a creator in the world of science, invention, literature and art. Though he wrote no book himself and wrote nothing but a few words in the sand that were soon obliterated, yet he was the most suggestive Teacher that ever lived, and out of him have grown vast forests of literature. He did not suppress thought, but stimulated it in his disciples and sowed the world with the germs of all truth. His Gospel as it went through the world immediately allied itself with and absorbed the elements of truth in Greek philosophy and Roman administration, and on down through the centuries it has breathed upon human genius and made it bloom into its most glorious achievements. Open the map of the world and wherever the light of his Gospel shines there science and art flourish. He stands in the center of the world, and all creative men bring their products to his feet. About the first use to which any notable invention is put is to extend his kingdom. The very first book printed on a printing press was the Bible, and this wonderful invention has been busier printing this book than any other to this day. The newspaper is a mighty agency for spreading his principles. The railway and

steamship carry his Gospel, the telegraph and telephone flash it, the airship when it comes will give wings to it, and wireless waves set the ether aquiver over whole continents and oceans with the messages of Jesus Christ. The sewing machine sews for him, the typewriter writes for him, the dynamo whirls for him, and even battleships and bayonets may fight for him. For him the poet conceives his sublimest imagery, the musician constructs his grandest symphonies, the artist paints his masterpieces, and the sculptor is ever searching for marble white enough for his brow. At his feet Dante lays his Divine Comedy, Raphael his Transfiguration, Michelangelo his Moses, Milton his Paradise Lost, Tennyson his In Memoriam, and Lincoln his Emancipation Proclamation. The men of highest genius do their best under the inspiration of Jesus Christ. In an ever increasing measure he is drawing all men into his service, and this process will go on until the world lies at his feet and he is immeasurably above all. Agnosticism has no worthy pictures to paint, atheism is not singable, but at the touch of Jesus Christ the world grows into a system of truth, blossoms into beauty and breaks into song.

VII. The supreme creative work of Christ is in the field of personal redemption. He "came

to seek and to save that which was lost," and these nineteen hundred years have been a fulfilment of that purpose and promise. He fashioned his personal disciples in some degree into his own likeness and picked some jewels up out of the very gutters and slums of Judea. Penitent publicans were received into his fellowship, and outcasts crept to his feet and found forgiveness and hope. Down through the centuries he has gathered out of every generation an increasing number who have believed on him and been forgiven, cleansed and transformed. Some of the wickedest men have been transfigured into goodness, and many souls have become saints who shine as white stars in the world. The Church is the Body of Christ in which his Spirit dwells, and while it is burdened with many human faults and even enormities, yet it has ever contained a multitude of beautiful spirits, its works of righteousness and charity attest his presence, and it is the purest and noblest organization known in history. Millions of men and women through all these ages have loved and do now love Jesus Christ with a devotion that has stood every test of service and sacrifice, trial and tears. He is their Lord and Saviour whose words are their comfort and peace, and whose presence is their strength and joy. An innumerable multi-

tude is thus ever gathering around his feet and receiving from him inspiration and power to go out and conquer the world for him. Prayer and praise are ever ascending unto him, and he is ever fulfilling his promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Christendom is Christ writ large. It dates its calendar from his birth and organizes itself around him as its center. The Christian centuries are his lengthened shadow. This fact is a tremendous confirmation and proof of his divine personality and power. He said that he would be with his disciples unto the end of the world, and the world so far matches his promise. It is true that there are yet many stains and shadows on the world; it is still in the twilight or in the dark. But the Sun has not yet fully risen; it has only swung above the eastern horizon, and long time must elapse before it can ascend to the zenith and flood the world with midday splendor. But the dawn has reddened the East and given promise of the day. Standing in the frame of these nineteen centuries Jesus Christ is seen to be larger than any figure of our human kind and to be crowned with power and glory as the Son of God.

## CHAPTER XXII

### INADEQUATE EXPLANATIONS OF CHRIST

It is always important that we consider the opposition. Truth is not the monopoly of any school or party, and those that oppose us may catch a glimpse of it from a different angle or emphasize an aspect we are neglecting. Jesus Christ is a fact that cannot be overlooked in any view of history. He fills the horizon of the centuries, and no eye can be blind to his presence and significance. What view have unbelievers taken of him, how have they fitted him into the frame of history and accounted for his enormous power? In general it can be said they have been profoundly impressed with the problem of his personality and influence, and their inadequate explanations are in themselves a wonderful tribute to him.

I. These perverted or partial explanations of Christ began during his own life and ministry. Many were the judgments passed upon him by unbelieving or hostile contemporaries, more than sixty of these being recorded in the Gospels. They

form an illuminating study and throw a flood of light upon Jesus from many points of view. The wonder of his person and power began at once. "Is not this the carpenter?" "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" "Whence hath this man these things?" "Who can forgive sins, but God alone?" "What do we? for this man doeth many signs." "Behold how ye prevail nothing: lo, the world is gone after him." The most diverse explanations were given of him. "Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." "We know this man whence he is." "Some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people." "He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils he casteth out devils." "We have found this man perverting our nation." "Away with him, crucify him!" Some of the charges made against him were unconscious tributes to him. "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them." "Because that thou, being man, makest thyself God." "He saved others; himself he cannot save." Others of these testimonies rise to lofty heights of appreciation. "I find no fault in this man." "Never man spake like this man." "Truly this was the Son of God." This babel of conflicting voices is impressive testimony to the fact that Jesus was a wonder and

mystery these hostile Jews could not comprehend; and amidst it all Christ stands a calm and sublime Figure immeasurably transcending their little theories, only heightened by the contrast of their petty views and spirit.

II. Passing by ancient attacks, such as that of Celsus, a Greek philosopher of the second century, the earliest literary opponent of Christianity, let us come down to modern times and look at a few of the most noted theories. One of the first of these is Gibbon's celebrated Fifteenth Chapter in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.* He was deeply impressed with the rapid spread of the Christian religion in the ancient world and with its triumph after the bloody trial to which it had been subjected. In explanation of this spread he adduced five causes and elaborates them with all the resources of his profound learning and his polished literary art. His five causes are: The zeal of the Jews, the Christian doctrine of immortality, the miraculous powers of the primitive Church, the virtues of the first Christians, and the activity of the Christians in the government of the Church. These causes, like some of the unconscious tributes of the hostile Jews, are highly complimentary to Christianity and put bright crowns on the brow of Christ. It was early pointed

out that these "causes" are themselves the very things to be explained, and thus the skeptical historian begs the question. How comes it that the Christians had such zeal and had such a hold of immortality and seemed to have miraculous powers and were so virtuous and had such success in the organization and extension of the Church? These things are fruits that demand some worthy root, and this can be found only in Jesus Christ.

III. Seventy-five years ago there appeared from the pen of David Friedrich Strauss (1808-1874) a *Life of Christ,* which made a great noise in the world, and some thought the heavens of Christian faith were passing away. Strauss looked into the origin of Christianity and found a myth. A myth is a story that grows up in explanation of an event, until its real origin is forgotten, and then it is elaborated into an unconscious creation. Strauss explained the origin of Christianity on this principle. Christ lived and taught as a Teacher, gathered some disciples, was opposed by the Pharisees, and fell a victim to their hate. His death disappointed his disciples, but they were men of Oriental imagination, and their desires and dreams were the seeds of stories that grew with the years into all the teachings, miracles, events and doctrines of the Gospels and Epistles. Accord-

ing to this theory Christianity created Christ, the shadows made the Alps. The theory died long before its author, because a myth takes generations for its growth, and Christianity sprang up quickly.

IV. After Strauss' mythical theory had had its little day it was succeeded by another, and again many thought Christianity had met its doom. Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792-1860) was another great German scholar, who was the teacher of Strauss, but followed him with a *Life of Christ.* What did he find when he looked into the origin of Christianity? He found the disciples of Jesus divided into two camps, the Petrine and the Pauline. The former maintained that Christianity was only an improved Judaism for the Jews alone, and the latter that it was a universal religion, for the Gentile as well as for the Jew. These two "tendencies" generated all the literature of the New Testament and wrote every Gospel and Epistle to support the one or the other of them. Baur traced this conflict through the entire New Testament and found some mark or hint of it in almost every verse. So these conflicting parties created Christ. This was like explaining Napoleon by the quarrels of his generals, or Abraham Lincoln by the jealousies of the members of his cabinet. This theory had its little day and melted away like morning

mist. The "tendency theory" destroyed the "mythical theory," because it maintained the New Testament was written under the play of conscious purpose, and the simple facts of the New Testament destroyed them both. Yet these German scholars rendered a great service to Biblical scholarship, for they initiated the historical study of the life of Christ that has resulted in such a forest of literature and has greatly strengthened and enriched Christian faith.

V. The next skeptical *Life of Christ* that attracted great attention was that of Ernest Renan (1823-1892), which appeared in 1863. Renan wrote his work after the fashion of a French novelist, investing it with all the arts and charms of poetry and romance. He painted the life of Jesus as the "sweet Galilean vision" of one in whom "tenderness of heart was transformed into an infinite sweetness, a vague poetry, a universal charm." Jesus began teaching, simply and honestly enough, as a preacher of the purest code of morals and a healer of disease, but growing popularity swept him on its current into mild deception as a means of carrying it to a successful end; yet this delightful pastoral and lovely idyl became a terrible tragedy which "ends for the historian with his expiring cry on the cross." Renan indulges in

glowing descriptions and eulogies and at times his poetry becomes rhapsody; yet he dissolves the Gospel history into a legend in which fact and fiction are so interblended that the line between the two cannot be distinctly drawn. His "legendary hypothesis" differs from Strauss' "mythical theory" only in degree and not in kind; it allows rather more historical substance, but that substance is still a misty though it may be a gorgeous cloud.

VI. The fallacy of all these theories is that they put the consequences in place of the cause. Christ is created by Christianity, or by its biographers, or by legend; the stream creates the fountain, the building holds up the foundation. This is the reversal of the order of cause and effect and of all historical explanation. His biographies did not create Washington, but Washington created his biographies; the shadows do not make the Alps, but the Alps cast the shadows. The stupendous fabric of Christianity must have some worthy origin and sufficient cause; it cannot be a stream with no adequate fountain, or a vast shadow with no mountain wall that would cast it. The stream of Christianity has broadened with the ages, but it is against all analogy and reason to suppose that it originated in a swamp or a fog. Myth and legend and divisions among its disci-

ples are wholly inadequate to create the sharp historical personality and concrete literature we find at the origin of Christianity. Back of all this history must be a cause large enough and divine enough to match it, and this we find only in the historical person and life of Jesus. Christianity did not create Christ, but Christ created Christianity.

VII. The modern Unitarian view of Christ is that he is the supreme religious leader of men, the finest outflowering and topmost blossom of the race. In him God has revealed himself most fully and splendidly, and he is therefore the Light of the world. But Unitarianism rejects any trinitarian distinction in the Godhead, quietly erases the miraculous element from the life of Christ, and discrowns him of his divinity. It views him as only one more of his human kind, surpassingly good and beautiful, it is true, but still only a man. The adherents of this form of faith have embraced many eminent literary men and people of culture, and many of their leaders have been foremost in their tributes to Christ. Channing, the father of American Unitarianism, was a powerful defender of Christian faith, and one may read the books of Prof. F. G. Peabody and never suspect that he is a Unitarian. His two books *Jesus Christ and the Social Question,* and *Jesus Christ and*

*the Christian Character,* are notable contributions to recent Christian literature, and his chapter on "The Character of Jesus Christ" is as penetrating, original, luminous and eloquent as Bushnell's famous chapter with the same title. Unitarians also exhibit the Christian virtues in a praiseworthy degree, and many of their leaders have been men of the most beautiful character. Yet, however sincerely and deeply they may appreciate Christ and however loyally they may follow him, they take only a partial view of his person and teaching and necessarily gloss over the miraculous and divine elements in his life. They are chary about discussing these points and generally avoid by refusing to consider the old dilemma that Christ is either God or else not good. They are not to be classed spiritually with Strauss and Renan, and yet intellectually they belong with them. While Unitarianism has had a modifying effect upon trinitarian theology, yet it has made no considerable impression and progress. It is good and beautiful as far as it goes, but it will ever remain an inadequate explanation of Christ.

VIII. The utterances concerning Christ of modern thinkers and scholars that are either unbelievers or are only broadly Christian believers, are a remarkable testimony to his person and work

and show how far even the greatest skeptics are compelled to go in their appreciation if not in their adoration of Jesus. Immanuel Kant, when some one instituted a comparison between his moral teachings and those of Jesus, said: "One of those names, before which the heavens bow, is sacred, while the other is only that of a poor scholar endeavoring to explain to the best of his abilities the teachings of the Master." Johann Fichte wrote: "Till the end of time, all the sensible will bow low before this Jesus of Nazareth, and all will humbly acknowledge the exceeding glory of this great phenomenon. His followers are nations and generations." Jean Paul Richter calls Jesus "the purest of the mighty, the mightiest of the pure, who with his pierced hands raised empires from their foundations, turned the stream of history from its old channels, and still continues to rule and guide the ages." David Friedrich Strauss confessed that Jesus "among the improvers of ideal humanity stands in the very first class, and remains the highest model of religion within the reach of our thought; and no perfect piety is possible without his presence in the heart." Rousseau, instituting a comparison between Socrates and Jesus, concludes: "If Socrates lived and died like a philosopher, Jesus lived and died like a God."

Renan ends his *Life of Jesus* with these words: "Whatever may be the surprises of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed. His worship will grow young without ceasing; his legend will call forth tears without end; his sufferings will melt the noblest hearts; all ages will proclaim that, among the sons of men, there is none born greater than Jesus." These testimonies could be multiplied indefinitely.

The total impression these inadequate explanations make upon us is that they are themselves a wonderful tribute to Jesus and almost amount to the exclamation of the Roman soldier, "Truly this was the Son of God." Yet however far they go and wonderful they are, they still fall short of the reality and are partial and inadequate. The Figure is larger than any of these frames men have tried to construct around it: the Person back of them is too transcendent and divine to be explained by them. The fountain they give us is still too small for the stream, the mountain they find is too low for the vast shadows it has cast. We are driven back of these inadequate explanations to one that is deeper and diviner, and this we find only in Jesus Christ as the incarnate Son of God.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE HOLY SPIRIT

THE complex and rich inner life of the Godhead is manifested in the three personal distinctions of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The order of manifestation is from the Father through the Son by the Spirit. The Father is the creator from whom all things proceed, the Son is the medium or agent through whom the Father operates, and the Spirit executes the purpose and applies the power of the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is thus the executive of the Godhead and is immanent in all its activities in the world. Yet we are not to think of the Spirit as being separated from the Father and the Son: all three are present in all their works in their indissoluble unity; but the Spirit is the immediate agent in divine operations.

I. The Spirit was the agent in the creation of the world and is immanent in nature. The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters in creation as the brooding presence and power that called all things into existence and wooed them

into form and use; and the Spirit is still present in all the agents and activities of nature as their creating, upholding and guiding cause. "Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created; and thou renewest the face of the ground." The heavens were made and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. Thus the whole frame of nature is the immediate creation of the Spirit, and all its life is the breathing of his breath. Nature is not an opaque and lifeless lump of matter interposed between God and man, but is his living Spirit manifesting his life, thought, feeling and will, and in him we live and move and have our being.

II. The Spirit is the creative agent and guiding presence in our human world. The Lord God created man by breathing into his nostrils the breath of life, and all human souls are the immediate offspring of the Spirit. The Spirit is universally present in the life of humanity as the source of all truth, goodness, beauty and joy. God has made the human mind to match his own mind of truth and is leading it slowly through long ages and strenuous processes of education into truth. All the truth that has ever been gained in the world, whether in Christian or in heathen minds, has been the product of the joint action

of the human mind and the divine Spirit. The fact that this truth has ever been mixed with error and sometimes the light has been almost extinguished in darkness, does not exclude the presence and activity of the Spirit from the human process of finding and developing truth. The skill of men in catching and mastering the forces of nature and improving the arts is also stimulated and guided by the Spirit of God. Moses said unto the children of Israel, "See, the Lord hath called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; and he hath filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; and to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting stones for setting, and in carving of wood, to work in all manner of cunning workmanship" (Exodus 31: 2-3). Thus the workman's skill, the artist's picture, the musician's symphony and the poet's vision are the product of the presence of the Spirit working in the minds of men. So also all the goodness and happiness in the world are streams flowing from the central Fountain in the Spirit of God. This co-working of the divine Spirit with the human mind does not interfere with the self-activity of the human mind and deprive it of its

agency and responsibility, but the divine Spirit is a stimulating and guiding influence.

III. The Spirit of God is especially manifest in the moral and spiritual life of the world. Christ promised that the Spirit would "convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." This brings the Spirit into direct contact with the universal human conscience to stir it into moral and spiritual activity. God made the soul with a moral nature and keeps it bathed in his presence so that it is always under a divine stimulus. Out of this grow all the goodness and character, all the repentance and righteousness in the world. Wherever a human soul feels its guilt and turns from an evil way, there the Holy Spirit is convicting of sin and righteousness and judgment. And the same Spirit prompts men to seek a God and Father and to pour out their souls in prayer and worship. It is under this impact and pressure of the Holy Spirit that the world is moving forward out of old evils into clearer light and better conduct. The work of the Spirit is thus much wider than the Christian Church and is universal in the world. This presence of the Spirit is not disproved by the terrible darkness of the heathen world: the human atmosphere may be murky, but the divine Light is still shining there.

IV. The Spirit is manifested more clearly in the Church. Christ told the disciples that it was expedient that he should leave the world, but that the Spirit would come and would guide them into all truth. "He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you." The Spirit is thus in the world to carry out on a universal scale the work of Christ, taking of the things of Christ and applying them to the hearts of men so as to make them vivid, effective and fruitful. The special work of the Spirit is in guiding the Church into truth. Truth is the foundation of the Christian faith and life, and it is of the first importance that the human mind and heart be led into the truth concerning God and Christ, the soul and its sin, salvation and service. This work is effected by the presence of the Spirit in the world so as to enlighten and quicken the human mind and heart. The moral convictions and spiritual moods of the soul depend intimately upon the atmosphere in which it is bathed, the light that is shining upon it, the subtle spiritual influences that are stimulating it. The Spirit has access to these sources of control and can bring them to bear on the soul with penetrating power. It often happens that a soul experiences a deep change in its whole attitude towards spiritual things, as though it had moved

into a new spiritual climate or had risen to a higher level. Old familiar truths suddenly begin to burn and glow with new light and power. The Spirit has taken of these things and shown them unto that soul. Pentecost was a tremendous outburst of such spirtual power, the Reformation and the Wesleyan revival were manifestations of the same presence, and all revivals spring from this source. The Church consists of a body or organism of minds and hearts that have in a measure been brought into harmony and tune with the Spirit so that it is receptive to his presence and influence; and the progress of the Church through the ages in Christian truth is the result of this indwelling and illumination. Christ declared to his disciples, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." This promise is still being fulfilled. Truth is a vast sea, and only small streams of it have as yet poured into the Church; it is a sun of light, and only its dawn has risen on the human mind. The Spirit of all truth has yet many things to say unto us, and we should keep our minds and hearts open to every word and accent of his voice.

V. The Spirit works in the heart of the individual so as to lead it to repentance and faith. It is the Spirit's sovereign work to effect the deep

change in the heart known as regeneration, by which the germ of divine life is imparted to the soul. Into the nature and mystery of this work we cannot penetrate; but we know its accompanying conditions and fruits, and these are repentance, faith and obedience. The Spirit is in and under these also; but not so as to produce them by any necessary process that is against our will or that permits us to remain passive and quiescent; the soul must be an active and earnest co-worker in these processes. We have the power of concentrating and holding our attention upon a truth or mental state, and when thus held in the focus of the mind it attracts to itself kindred associations and begins to glow with light and heat and at length may fill and possess and master the whole soul. It is in this power of directing and intensifying our attention that our self-control and responsibility chiefly reside; and it is in and through such rational processes that the Spirit uses the truth to convince of sin and righteousness and judgment and bring us into a state of penitence and faith.

We are thus immersed in the presence of the Spirit as in a universal sea or atmosphere and are dependent on him at every point. He is immanent in the physical world, comes to higher expression in life, and manifests himself in a still

higher degree in the soul of man with its moral and spiritual powers. He is the divine agent in leading us into truth and bringing us to a new birth in which we are born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, but of God. God comes down into us through the Spirit, and through the Spirit our penitence and faith and praise go up to God. To be filled with the Spirit is to be full of life, with all its good and beautiful and blessed fruits, and the aim and effort of the Christian life is to grow in the Spirit so as to be filled with all the fulness of God.

# CHAPTER XXIV

## SALVATION

THE whole process of redemption, wrought out by the Father's love through Christ and applied by the Holy Spirit, comes to its fruition in the salvation of the believer. Salvation consists in deliverance from sin and restoration to righteousness in fellowship with God, and we are now to see how this is attained.

I. As sin is separation in self-will from God, so salvation is union with God. This is effected through union with Christ by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believing soul. That the believer is in Christ and Christ in the believer is a central fact in New Testament teaching, especially in the last private discourses of Christ with his disciples and the epistles of Paul. "As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us;...I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one." "Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, they are become new." "I have been

crucified with Christ: yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me." The phrase "in Christ" is characteristic of Paul's letters and is the keynote of his teaching. It is evident that this relation is not simply one of moral union or personal friendship, such as we experience in our human friendships, but is a much deeper and more intimate one. It is a relation of mutual immanence by which the Spirit of Christ is interblended with the soul of the believer and the believer is ensphered in the Spirit. We may conceive of this relation as being somewhat like that of our thoughts, feelings and volitions to our souls. These mental states are in our souls and our souls are in them, and yet the self and its states remain distinct. So Christ and the believer remain personally distinct, and yet Christ is in the soul and the soul is in Christ.

II. This vital union is effected on the divine side through the sovereign agency of the Holy Spirit, but on the human side it is effected through the free action of the soul itself. The primary action of the soul at this point is that of faith. Faith is a universal fact in life. It begins in infancy with dependence on parenthood and unfolds through all life in mutual trust and friendship. Without it human society could not exist, and

individual life would perish. It is the trust of the heart, especially personal confidence. The same faith that thus binds men together in society, business and friendship, reaches up to God and lays hold of him in trust and obedience. God has come to man in his universal Spirit, and especially has he drawn near and shown his face and love in Christ. The soul believes in God's presence and promises and commits itself to Christ. Such a commitment is faith; and it is a tie that binds the soul to Christ in union and fellowship in which the believing soul and the Saviour begin to live a common life of love and service.

III. Concurrent with faith is another primary act of the believing soul, and that is repentance. This is a changed attitude of the soul towards sin. It is commonly regarded as a painful feeling of sorrow over sin, but it is primarily a changed mind, leading to feeling and obedience. Under the presence and power of the Holy Spirit the soul comes to see sin in its true light as rebellion against the righteousness and wisdom and goodness of God and self-injury that works deep and fatal damage to the soul and wide injury to others. So intense may be its sense of guilt in the sight of God that it may exclaim, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight."

When this conviction passes on into a practical turning of the whole soul and life from the evil state of heart and course of conduct towards God and his righteousness, the soul has repented, or changed its mind, as the word means. Both faith and repentance are within the power of the soul under the play of the Holy Spirit. However dependent we are on the grace of God at these points, we are conscious of our own freedom and responsibility and know that, if we will, we can believe and repent. By these acts the soul consummates its union with Christ.

IV. This union now carries with it the essentials of salvation on both the divine and the human side. On the divine side it involves the atoning grace and pardon of God in Christ. We have seen that by virtue of his union with humanity as its Head and Representative Christ stands responsible for man before God and answers for man's sin. It was in this relation that he bore the Cross and thus made an atonement that satisfies the Fatherly love and holy righteousness of God. The virtue of this atonement can pass over to the individual soul only as it comes into a new personal union with Christ through its own faith and repentance. It is thus God himself is just, and yet "the justifier of him that hath faith in

Jesus." This is not an unnatural and untrue justification by which God declares an unjust person to be just on the ground of the justice of another independent person: these two persons, the unjust sinner and the just Saviour, are in a deep sense one. The Saviour is the Head of the race of which the sinner is a member, and as a believing, penitent member of the new body of Christ the sinner is crucified with Christ and shares in his righteousness. The believing sinner thus stands as one with Christ before God; and on the ground of this relation God pardons the sinner's sin and restores him to his favor and fellowship.

V. What, then, becomes of the saved sinner's sins? Are they not still visited upon him, and where is his salvation, and where comes in the grace of God? Salvation saves the sinner from his sin in two respects. It saves him absolutely from the unimpeded course and final end of sin by breaking off the sinner's relation to this course and end. The further course and final end of the prodigal's waywardness would have been deeper misery and death; and from this he was saved by returning in penitence to his father's house. So the final end of unchecked sin is ever deeper degradation and misery in this world and eternal

death in the next; and from this course and end the believing sinner is saved outright by the pardoning grace of God. It is wholly an act of divine grace by which this is done. God might have justly let sinners go on unrestrained in their course, but his love went out after them in the whole work of redemption from the first gleam of the promise of a Saviour to the Sacrifice of the Cross and the final application of the Spirit; and therefore God saves us out of his infinite love by himself bearing the burden of our sin.

VI. But after we are thus delivered from the full course and final end of our sin, we must still bear the temporary results of our remaining sinful disposition and acts. Salvation in the soul by its very nature cannot be an instantaneous act, but is a gradual process or growth. The consequences of these remaining sins are inflicted upon us, but they are inflicted as chastisements rather than as punishments. They are remedial measures that work together for our good. The saved sinner himself accepts them in a penitent and filial spirit. It is thus seen that the penalties of our sins are not inflicted twice, once on Christ and then once on us; but Christ bore their penalty and we bear their chastisement. Thus God is just and we are saved, and the whole process exhibits his glorious grace.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

SALVATION having been begun by the Spirit in the heart is now to be worked out in the Christian life.

I. The Christian life is one of faith. Faith is the initial act that originates salvation in the soul, and is also the continuous means and state by which it is sustained and developed. We live by faith in all the lines of life, from our lowest physical up to our highest spiritual needs and activities. It is only as we trust one another that we can maintain friendship, do business or hold the simplest relations with one another. Faith is the filament that weaves all our lives into a social web, the atmosphere of society in which we live and move and have our being. The same faith sends its tendril up and wraps it around God. As we believe and trust men, so do we believe and trust God. Faith is not one thing when exercised towards man and another when exercised towards God, but is the same in both cases. The Chris-

tian life is thus a normal life in its fundamental principle; it is just our natural human life carried up to its highest application, fruitage and power. Christian faith trusts God at every point. It trusts his wisdom in the constitution and government of the world; and when it cannot understand his providence and is enveloped in twilight or in darkness it keeps its hand in his and walks on as he opens the way. It trusts his grace for pardon and cleansing, wisdom and strength, patience and peace. It trusts him through all the experiences of life, its duties and dangers, trials and sorrows, and for final triumph in death. The Christian thus lives by faith, "as seeing him who is invisible," looking not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen, and having his anchor cast within the veil. Such faith is not weakness but strength. It is faith that has made men masterful in all the walks of life, and in no other line does it rise to such heights and attain such heroism and power as when it lays hold of God and lives a life of faith in Jesus Christ.

II. The Christian life is one of prayer. Prayer is the soul giving expression of its needs and aspirations unto God. Expression is necessary to the very existence of life. Thought cannot grow into clearness and power except as it shapes itself

into words. Max Muller maintained that we cannot even think without words. "To think," he said, "is to speak low, and to speak is to think aloud." To feel our needs, then, and to have desires for fellowship with God, we must give voice to them in prayer. Such expression makes them definite and vivid for ourselves and gives them virtue with God. The practice of prayer is thus a powerful means of calling out our souls and raising them to a higher level of spiritual experience. This reflex influence of prayer, however, depends for its reality and efficiency upon the power that prayer has with God. If prayer were simply a self-contained subjective exercise and state of the soul it could no more lift us up than we can rise to the stars by tugging at ourselves. Prayer is a genuine speaking to God and entering into fellowship with him so that he can enter into us and work through us and for us. Whatever philosophical difficulties may be thrown around the subject of prayer, in its essential nature it is as natural and simple as a child's speech to its father. It is making known our thoughts and wants unto God in a spirit of humble dependence and filial fellowship; and then God can and does answer us in accordance with his own wisdom and grace. Prayer harmonizes our souls with God so that we

grow calm and clear and begin to see things as he sees them, as a mountain lake when it is perfectly still reflects the blue sky and mirrors the full-orbed image of the sun. To a soul in such a state God can disclose his will, into it he can pour his Spirit, and through it and for it he can work out his purpose. Through the habit and spirit of prayer the Christian grows into intimacy with God so that he comes to know his mind and walks in his companionship in strength and peace and joy.

III. The Christian life feeds on the truth. It is based on reality throughout, and has no affinity with or place for superstition, delusion, error, or unreality of any kind or degree. God is a God who cannot lie, and all his works and words are reality and truth. A fundamental duty of the Christian is to know the truth and fear it not. He is to have and exercise the truth-loving spirit and make truth his pursuit and passion. He is to seek to get at reality for himself, and not to be governed by mere tradition or authority, or by personal interest and partisanship. However vital and sacred a cherished belief may seem, it ought to be given up when it is found to be not true. The obligation to know the truth is one of the most fundamental in the whole field of conscience, and it binds the Christian with special force. It

is his duty to be teachable and hospitable towards all truth in every field, whether in history or science or art, as well as in morals and religion. But the truth that is specially vital to the Christian is that which pertains to God and Christ and the Christian life, and to this study he should give himself with special diligence and ardor. While this truth is set forth and illuminated in Christian literature, yet its original and richest source is the inspired Word of God. The Bible is the winnowed wisdom of ages of religious and Christian experience. Into it God has breathed through holy men the thoughts he would have us know and meditate upon, the words that are spirit and life. Generations have fed upon this book and found it the bread of the heart. It has passed into the blood of Christendom and produced its noblest men and women, its purest saints and most beautiful souls. As we get the truth contained in this book absorbed and assimilated into us we think the thoughts of God and are made strong in his strength.

IV. The Christian is thus to maintain a deep and rich inner life. Faith, prayer and meditation are the means by which he cultivates his soul on its inner side. All worthy life must first be lived inwardly before it can be lived outwardly. The

architect thinks his building through in his mind before he erects it in stone and steel. The artist paints his picture in the gallery of his imagination before he puts it on canvas, and the musician hears his music in the chamber of his soul before he pours it through his voice or flings it through his fingers out upon the world. Long preparation must precede successful execution. The harvest may ripen in a day and be gathered in an hour, but it has been growing through months, if not years. A great surgeon said that if he had only three minutes for a critical operation, he would take two to get ready. Jesus took thirty years of preparation for just three years of work. So we need to meditate much in order that we may be architects and artists in living. Often should we sit in solitude and silence and grow acquainted with ourselves, look ourselves in the face and feel our spiritual pulse and see what manner of persons we are. It is possible for us to be veritable strangers to ourselves. Some people are afraid to be alone, and are always itching for excitement and craving a crowd. Such a life is superficial, feverish and fretful, and is sure to end in disappointment and misery. We should have deep roots to our inner life by which we grow acquainted with and gain control over ourselves and gather

resources that will give us full mastery and might.

V. Yet the Christian life is of a highly social nature and from its inner fountain should flow in rich streams into outer life. Its first outer expression is in righteous character and conduct. The inner life and the outer must match. Faith must flow into fact, creed into character, and character into conduct. Truth is a fundamental virtue of Christian life. The Christian should be a man of his word, whose every utterance and act represents reality, so that men seeing one side or angle of his life will know him through and through. Inner purity of soul that sees God should express itself in outer purity of life, as the inner nature of the fruit comes out in its golden skin or rosy bloom. The Christian should be a man of honesty and honor, squaring his business transactions and all his affairs with the strictest integrity and fairness. In his domestic relations he should be pure and faithful, as good a Christian in the privacy of the home as in the light of publicity. His character and conduct should be marked by the gentle and generous virtues of the Christian life, self-control, patience and peaceableness, kindness and courtesy, brotherly good-will and helpfulness, benevolence and charity, goodness and love, cheerfulness and joy, sympathy and sacrifice. He is to be a living

gospel, known and read of all men, doing the same things Jesus did and in a way reproducing him. The Christian is to be Christ continued and duplicated. And he is to live this life in this present world. He is not to be a dreamy visionary or fanatic, standing aloof from the world and gazing into heaven, but a man of flesh and blood, down in the very midst and heart of this world, taking part in all its affairs, its business and politics, as well as its religion and worship. The Christian is to be emphatically in the world and of the world, and yet is to keep himself unspotted from the world.

VI. The Christian life is one of fellowship. While the Christian in the world is to maintain friendly and helpful relations as far as possible with all men, yet his special affinities are to be found in the household and brotherhood of faith. The human soul is very social and absorbent in its nature and gathers strength and satisfaction from souls of its own kind. Men of the same trade or profession or science or art get together in various kinds of unions and societies, and from such union they derive mutual profit and pleasure. The same principle should draw and bind Christians together. Faith thus strengthens faith, and love begets love. While this fellowship is to be

maintained in all the relations of life, yet it finds its home and fullest expression in the Church. In its worship and work believers are drawn into the finest fellowship and upon them as thus assembled together God pours out his most abundant and richest blessings.

VII. The Christian life is one of service. Christ having found Philip, Philip then found Nathanael, and thus started the golden chain that has lengthened down to us. The Christian life by its very nature is self-propagating, spreading from heart to heart. Christians are saved to serve; having received freely, they are to give freely, and thus the Kingdom of God is widened over the world. It is the duty and should be the business of every Christian to try to win others to the Christian life through his personal example, persuasion and prayer. Every Christian life is in touch with other lives, and at the points of contact should endeavor to impart the precious gift of grace. Most converts are won through this personal influence, and the Christian should never forget that he is saved himself in order that he may save others. Not only is the Christian to serve God in this special work of winning other souls, but he is to turn his whole life into Christian service. He is not to confine his religion to one day in the week,

but diffuse it through all his days. His pleasures are to be as pure as his prayers, and Saturday afternoon as holy with him as Sabbath morning. His work is to be his worship, and whether he eats or drinks, buys or sells, prays or plays, he is to do all to the glory of God.

The ideal of the Christian life is a high and holy one and we can never feel that we have attained it. But we are to work at it and ever strive towards it through our faults and failures, trials and tears; and through such perseverance we shall find it as blessed as it is beautiful, and it will ever lure us on towards that final perfection we shall realize when we pass through the gates into the city.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE CHURCH

THE soul must have a body, ideas must have hands and feet. The first Christians were organized into societies, and the Church is the body of Christ.

I. Jesus himself founded a church. He did not simply cast his ideas out into the air to survive or perish, but committed them to men whom he had trained to receive and propagate them. At first he attempted to work inside the Jewish Church, but this plan soon had to be abandoned. The old organization had lost vitality and plasticity and had become inhospitable and intractable to new ideas and further adaptation; it had crystallized into traditionalism that refused to yield to new demands; it had gone to seed in its husk and would bear no more fruit. Jesus therefore was forced to work outside of its bounds and to lay new foundations. He left the temple with its elaborate ritual and resorted to the simpler synagogue, and from the synagogue was driven to the street and sea-

shore. Out in the open, freed from the restrictions of the past, he made a new start. He gathered twelve men of unsophisticated minds around him and for three years poured his own mind into them and molded them to his purpose. Even they were somewhat refractory material and one of them proved false, but at length they responded to his touch and became mighty men in the history of religion and of the world. Jesus mentioned the Church only twice. In one instance (Matthew 18:17) he directed that when one has a difficulty with a brother and cannot settle it with him privately, he is "to tell it unto the Church," in which case the word evidently refers to the local congregation. In the other instance (Matthew 16:18) he said unto Peter, who had just made the great confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," "And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church." This refers to the universal Church, which is built upon the truth Peter had confessed. Nothing is said in the Gospels about the organization, polity, officers and ordinances of the Church, except that Jesus adopted the rite of baptism and instituted the ordinance of the Supper. Thus Christ himself made little of the Church, and gave only its germ and left its development to later times.

II. This development proceeds in the Acts, Epistles and other books of the New Testament, in which the Church fills a large place, being mentioned one hundred and twelve times. As the apostles went forth preaching they founded churches and rapidly planted them around the Mediterranean shore. These were at first only informal groups or gatherings of believers, who simply met for worship. There were no officials, polity or creed, but simply democratic bodies of people that acted together out of one mind. They were designated as "all the beloved of God, called to be saints" (Romans 1:7), the "faithful brethren in Christ" (Colossians 1:2), and by similar descriptive names. But presently there was need of concerted action, and then organization and officers became necessary. The outstanding fact on this subject is that there are no divinely appointed or authoritative officers and polities enjoined upon the Church in the New Testament, but these grew up as they were needed to meet existing conditions. The first instance of such need was that of the deacons, recorded in the sixth chapter of the Acts. The twelve apostles did the preaching and exercised general oversight of affairs until after the outpouring at Pentecost. As the church grew this work became too heavy for them, especially the

care of the poor, and they called the whole body of disciples together and submitted the case unto them. "Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business." In this quite democratic way the office of deacon was instituted and seven men were chosen to fill it. No divine precedent or command was appealed to, but the simple practical necessity for the office was the sufficient justification for its institution.

III. In a similar way other offices arose. Lists of these are given (Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11), including "apostles," "prophets," "evangelists," "pastors and teachers," "healings," "helps." These discharged the duties indicated by their names, but were not officials divinely ordained and enjoined on the churches; they came into service as they were needed or as they displayed aptitudes for special tasks. All the members were workers as they had "gifts differing." The newborn Church was full of life and gave birth to many offices or activities, some of which were short-lived and others survived. Practical need was their origin, and utility was their justification. Even the gift of "tongues," that seemed so purely miraculous, was subjected to this

test (I Corinthians 14:19). Out of these many tentative offices several have come down to us. Presently we find "elders" in all the churches as their pastors and teachers, or spiritual leaders. They are first mentioned (Acts 11:30) without any account of their origin, and Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey "ordained them elders in every church." Paul sent for "the elders of the church" of Ephesus and charged them "to feed the church of God." Bishops are also mentioned (Philippians 1:1), and these are generally held to be the same as the "elders," for Paul in charging the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:17-35) bids them to "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in the which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops." We also read of "deacons" (I Timothy 3:8), who served in various ways, but appear to have had the especial care of the poor. There is not a word said in the New Testament about handing down any office by Apostolic succession. The apostles originally were the immediate disciples and witnesses of Christ, and in this sense could have no successors. The development of these simple offices into a vast hierarchy was the work of a later age.

IV. The churches at first were more or less independent of one another, as they were founded here and there by the missionary apostles and evan-

gelists. Church government was of the Congregational type. But presently important matters arose in which it was necessary for the churches to consult and act together. A critical instance of such necessity was the question of circumcision and the whole Mosaic system. Was this still binding on Christians, or was it abrogated? On this question hung the whole future of Christianity, whether it was to remain a Jewish sect or become a world religion. Out of this question grew the first Council, General Conference, or General Assembly of the Church at Jerusalem. "The apostles and elders" met at Jerusalem "about this question," and after much debate it was settled that Christianity was not simply an improved Judaism but a universal religion, and a decree embodying this result was sent out to the churches. Thus general church government or polity arose out of a practical situation, just as did various offices in the individual congregation. "As God's people," says Fairbairn, "are a free people, He allows them to organize their own polities, the best polities always being the most deeply rooted in love, and so most creative of the spiritual and redeeming graces." The Church was thus a democratic institution in its origin, and we have still a Christian right to exercise this democratic spirit and adapt the

Church to the needs of our day. Any Church polity is good that meets conditions and does effective work, and such success is the seal of the divine approval.

V. This fact throws light upon the question of Church unity. The simple, democratic original forms of church polity at length became caught in the vast mesh of Roman imperialism and gradually grew into a counterpart of Rome, "the ghost of the Roman Empire sitting on its grave." The Church became a worldly despotism and had unity with a vengeance. But the system broke to pieces of its own weight and corruption, first into the Eastern and Western Churches and then into Protestantism. Rome still maintains its imperialistic claims, and there are those in Protestant communions who want to attain and exercise the same kind of unity. Union is a growing idea and spirit among the divided branches of Protestantism, but they can never go back to the mechanical monarchial basis of church unity. Such a basis has no ground in the New Testament, which is a democratic book through and through and exhibits only democratic churches. This mechanical unity has had its trial on an immense scale, and it proved impracticable and dangerous and had to be broken up, never to be restored. The true unity of the

Church is biological and not mechanical, of the Spirit and not of the form. Humanity is a unity, and yet it breaks into many races and nations, all breathing the same air and pulsing with the same blood. So the true unity of the Church consists in the same Spirit of Jesus Christ knitting its varied members into one body. This does not justify all the unhappy divisions in the Church. There are families of denominations that should be unified, and some divisions are born of human selfishness and sin. But there is no ground in Scripture or history for the theory that all churches should be united into one huge political organization: there is much against such a dream. The Church of Christ is not really divided against itself in these divisions, but it is differentiated into the members of an organism for greater efficiency.

VI. It is surprising to find how small a part the question of a creed played in the New Testament churches as compared with the tremendous part it has played in historic Christianity and still plays in our modern churches. The germs of creeds are found in the New Testament, but these are only broad and simple statements which have little resemblance to our elaborate creeds. Christ virtually made Peter's utterance, "Thou art the Christ,

the Son of the living God," the basal creed of his Church. In the Epistles we begin to find "faithful sayings," such as "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." These were Christian proverbs that passed from mouth to mouth until they assumed fixed forms and were in the nature of germinal creeds. Yet the question of a systematic and formal statement of Christian faith as a basis of Christian thought and fellowship was bound to arise. The human mind must think upon its materials, and Christianity could not escape the process of critical analysis and construction. Out of this necessity arose the great theological controversies of the early Church, issuing in Ecumenical Councils that drew up authoritative forms of statement or historic creeds. This process has worked its way down into our day and is still active in all the schools of thought in the Christian Church. It is this process that shows that Christian truth is a living, growing body and not a dead and fossilized system; and because its truth is alive the Church must re-examine, revise and rewrite its creeds in every generation, and thus bring them up to date into harmony with wider knowledge and deeper insight into Scripture and a truer apprehension of the Spirit of Christ.

Such investigation and revision may sometimes be attended with anxiety and alarm, but it is necessary and good in its place and is a sign, not of death, but of life.

VII. Ordinances have ever proved dangerous in religion, the outer form constricting the inner spirit, the husk smothering the grain. Yet every religion has them, and the Christian Church must have them. Never was there such scorching condemnation of outworn and dead ordinances as leaped like lightning from the lips of Jesus Christ; yet he instituted or adopted two of his own. An army must have a flag, a party a platform, and every society has something in the nature of a sign or badge of membership and loyalty. Jesus swept away the vast gorgeous system of Jewish ritual, but he gave his followers two simple and deeply significant ordinances. Baptism came into the Church from the Jewish system, but was invested with new significance. It is a sign of admission into the Church, either as an inherited birthright, as in infant baptism, or as a symbol of repentance and forgiveness in adult confession of faith. It affords a means by which such birthright may be sealed or such confession may be signalized, and thus makes the act more definite, vivid, public, fixed and final. The other ordinance, the Lord's

Supper, is a sign and seal of personal fellowship with Christ and a pledge of renewed loyalty to him. The ordinance is simple, universal and beautiful in its elements and significance. As the bread and wine pass into the believer's body and are assimilated into his physical life and strength, so does the Spirit of Christ pass into the believer's soul to reappear in the strength and fruitfulness, beauty and blessedness of his life. Jesus put emphasis upon these ordinances as of vital importance, and his true followers will never regard them lightly, but will be faithful in their observance "till he come."

VIII. The end of the Church is service. It is organized as the Body of Christ to manifest his Spirit and do his work in the world. It is a means by which its members hold deeper fellowship with one another and with God and Christ. Their common worship stirs up their spiritual nature and needs and spreads its contagion through their number and thus powerfully stimulates, strengthens and enriches their Christian life. God can pour more of his Spirit upon five hundred believers assembled with one accord in one place than upon the same number scattered in isolation, as Pentecost proves. The Church has been and is a powerful agency for conserving, defending,

developing and propagating the Christian faith and life. Its inner mission with its own members issues and is completed in its outer mission to the world. It is the organized agency by which Christian institutions, churches, schools, hospitals, are planted and maintained; by which Christian principles and forces are brought to bear upon the general life and welfare of society; and especially by which Christianity is extended over the world through home and foreign missions. It is the main field of Christian service in which Christians work out their own salvation into the lives of others and thereby work it in more deeply into themselves. It has been a long time in the world, but its mission has only just begun, it is still young and full of the vitality and hope of youth and is destined to leaven the whole lump of humanity. It is still imperfect and has many sins of its own to answer for, but it has in it the life and love, the mercy and the might of God, and will yet become a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

# CHAPTER XXVII

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD

THE Kingdom of God is God's rule on earth and in heaven. It is a larger idea than that of the Church, being the end of which the Church is the means and reaching through time and eternity.

I. In the widest sense this kingdom includes the whole universe. All the physical elements and operations of the world are the immediate working of the mind and will of God, and therefore are under his direct and absolute rule. However tangled and chaotic the physical world may seem to us at points, it is a kingdom of perfect order and obedience in which no atom ever gets out of place and all things work together in beautiful harmony. All spirits, also, human and superhuman, are included within the reign of this kingdom. Isaiah expresses the absoluteness of this reign when he represents the Lord as saying, "I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil. I the Lord do all these things." This statement leaves room for a distinction in the mode of God's creation of

these moral opposites, but it asserts his reign over both.

II. The phrase Kingdom of God, however, is used in a narrower sense as designating God's reign in the hearts and lives of his believing people, and this is the sense in which it is commonly used in the Scriptures. The Old Testament is pervaded with the idea of such a kingdom. The Hebrew monarchy was viewed as a form of it, and the prophets paint glowing pictures of its future perfection and power. The vision varies in its features. Sometimes the outer form of the kingdom is emphasized, and at other times its inner moral and spiritual character; sometimes it relates specially to Israel, and then again Gentiles are included in its bounds. It came to its fullest expression in Daniel, who predicted: "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." As time went on the spiritual elements of the picture faded and material colors came out more strongly, until when Christ came the Jews were passionately cherishing the hope of a worldly kingdom, with Jerusalem as its capital and themselves in its chief offices. This

danger of lapsing from spiritual to material views of the kingdom has ever attended religion, and it befell Christianity itself.

III. Jesus rescued the idea of the kingdom from its Jewish perversion and restored it to its spiritual purity. The kingdom fills a large place in his teaching, the term occurring one hundred and twelve times in the Gospels, while the Church is mentioned only twice. His first announcement was that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand," and during his ministry "Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom." Fairbairn thus summarizes the teaching of Jesus as to the kingdom: "He comes to found or create it. His instrument is preaching or teaching; His message is the gospel of the kingdom. He is the Sower who casts the seed, which is the Word, into the hearts of men. He defines it by various terms: it is 'of heaven' in contradistinction from 'the kingdom of Satan'—it is the realm of healing, harmony, love, and beneficence. It is a kingdom of truth—He is a King by virtue of His very being, and He bears witness to the truth, while His citizens are the men who, being of the truth, hear His voice. It is present; men may enter it, are even within it; the terms of entrance are obedience to

the Word, or the child-spirit. It comes without observation, spreads quietly like leaven, grows like seed. It is ethical in character; to seek it is to seek the righteousness of God, to pray for its coming is to ask that the will of God may be done on earth as in heaven. The men it honors and rewards are the poor in spirit, the persecuted for righteousness' sake, those who do the will of God, confess Christ before men, cultivate His spirit, live His life of ministry and grace. The signs of the kingdom are all spiritual and ethical, relate to gracious helpfulness and service, never to officers or acts ceremonial. It is universal, open to all without respect to place or race."[1]

IV. The characteristic feature of the kingdom is its spirituality. Unlike the Church it has no human organization, officers, ceremonies, ordinances. It "is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, There! for lo, the kingdom of God is within you." It is not a matter of outward act and place, but of inner disposition. We do not enter it so much as it enters us. It therefore begins in each individual soul by faith and grows through effort towards

[1] *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 516.

perfection. Its ideal is to bring every thought into conformity with the truth of God, every feeling into the purity of his holiness, every motive and deed into coincidence with his will. The redeemed soul is to be a kingdom in itself, with God on its throne bringing all its states and acts into harmony with himself. And from such souls as centers, the kingdom is to spread through society, winning converts and imparting its spirit as a leaven to all human institutions and thus subduing the world to God. The kingdom as far as it is realized is a state of harmony in which God is immanent in the world and the world is immanent in God. God is on its throne as King, and yet he is none the less a Father. His Kingship and Fatherhood are not antagonistic, but complementary and coincident. The Kingship of God involves no arbitrary despotism or harshness, and his Fatherhood involves no sentimental weakness, but the two combine into unity so that he is a fatherly Sovereign and a sovereign Father.

V. The relation of the kingdom to the Church and the world may now be seen. The kingdom includes the Church as the end includes the means. The organization of the Church, with its polity, creeds and ordinances, is an agency for instituting and extending the kingdom among men. All that

is going on in the Church, in so far as it is contributing to the spiritual growth of men, belongs to the kingdom as its means. But the kingdom is also wider and deeper than the Church and includes all the forces that make for righteousness in the world. It reaches out through the heathen world and embraces all the souls that according to their light are led by the Spirit of Christ in penitence and faith towards God. It is a great truth of the kingdom that "God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness is acceptable to him." We know not how many humble souls out in heathen darkness thus belong to the kingdom; missionaries all testify to their presence. It also includes all believing souls in Christian lands that are not in connection with the visible Church. Some persons are in the Church that are not in the kingdom, and some are in the kingdom that are not in the Church. Further, all agencies that are working for the advancement of this kingdom are included in it as means. Schools, hospitals, literature, the press, science, art, commerce—the whole complex and vast machinery of our civilization so far as it is doing good is a mighty agency for extending this kingdom in all lands. Wherever good is being done the kingdom of God is being established.

VI. It is our calling as Christians to work for the coming of this kingdom. Christ taught us to pray that it might come, and all duties converge on this end. The point for us to begin is in our own hearts. By faith and prayer, resolution and obedience we are to expel the anarchy of sin from our souls and bring every thought and imagination into loyal and loving submission to the will of our King. Our hearts will thus grow into the law and order, peace and power, beauty and blessedness of an inner kingdom which no outer change can touch. We are then to work for the extension of this kingdom through the world. Personal example, persuasion and prayer are effective means by which we are to impart its spirit to those with whom we are in immediate contact and fellowship; and beyond this personal circle we are to work through all opportunities and agencies for its wider extension in the world. The Church is the special means to this end, and our own church is the immediate field that should receive our loyal and energetic service and sacrifice. Yet we are not to forget that the kingdom is wider than the Church, and therefore we should be in sympathy with and give our service as opportunity offers to all the varied agencies that subserve the kingdom of God on earth. This will save us from sectarian narrow-

ness and enable us to fulfil our mission in the world.

VII. The future of the kingdom discloses an extended prospect of growth and struggle ending in final triumph. Much of the teaching of Jesus with respect to the kingdom, such as the parables of the seed and of the leaven, implies a long period during which it is slowly to spread over the field of the world or through the whole lump of humanity. Yet this growth is also a warfare in which the truth contends with error and good with evil; and at times the conflict thickens up into battles that may convulse the Church and the world. There are indications that the kingdom of darkness will increase its enmity and opposition as the kingdom of light grows more intense, and thus titanic struggles may come in later times. But all the prophecies and promises of Scripture run forward to a final triumph of the kingdom of God. Christianity is to pervade and mold our civilization more and more until it becomes dominant. Holiness unto the Lord is to be written upon the very bells of the horses—all agents and activities are to be stamped and imbued with the Christian spirit and devoted to Christian ends. Finally, there is to go up a great shout, "The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our

Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever." It is in some instances difficult to tell whether such predictions are to be realized in this world or in the next, as it is sometimes difficult to tell in a gorgeous sunset just where the earth leaves off and the sky begins. But all things are rolling on towards this great consummation, and if it is only partially realized in this world, it will come to its perfect and final fulfilment in that city of God which is his eternal and glorious kingdom.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### IMMORTALITY

THE immortality of the human soul is one of the widest and most vital beliefs in the world, engaging the profoundest thought of philosophers and poets, furnishing the main ground of religion, giving birth to the noblest literature, creating lofty character and affording satisfying comfort and hope in the presence of the darkest mysteries and sorrows of life. It is implied and assumed in all the doctrines of redemption, but we may now indicate some of the grounds on which it rests.

I. The initial and crucial difficulty in connection with belief in immortality is the close and continuous union of the soul with the body in this life. The soul and the body come into existence together and the one grows with the growth of the other and is in vital dependence on it at every point. Every change in the body is attended with a corresponding change in the soul, and so also every change in the soul affects the body. As the body wastes away in disease or wears out in age the soul appears to

decline in vigor with it and often seems to be reduced to a mere spark of consciousness. There are artists in India that produce portraits on water by means of different kinds of dust of various colors, which they deftly sprinkle on the water so as to form the features of the face, and which thus compose a floating portrait of wonderful lifelikeness and beauty. But the image lasts only as long as the water is perfectly still. A disturbance of the water distorts the picture, and a wave sweeps it into confusion. The body of man is plainly only such an image of colored dust floating on the surface of this agitated and often stormy world: is his soul also only the finer portion of this dust and is it also submerged and destroyed in the wave of death? The objection appears powerful and gives us a pause; and yet strong considerations break and overcome its force. The dust of the body is passing through a constant process of disturbance and replacement, and yet the self abides through it all unchanged: if the soul can survive this process by which it is continuously stripped of its body may it not survive the deeper change of death? The body presents every appearance of being the tool of the soul: may not a tool become broken or worn out and be laid aside without impairing the skill of the worker?

When a telegraph instrument stops working the operator does not stop thinking. The first cable laid under the Atlantic after operating for a few weeks suddenly ceased to transmit messages. The people of America did not conclude that Europe had ceased to exist when that wire stopped working: they only concluded that there was something wrong with the wire. So we are not to conclude that the soul has ceased to exist when it ceases to communicate through the body; the body is simply worn out or broken, and the soul is using some other vehicle of expression.

II. The soul itself presents strong evidence of its eternal value. It is spirit, and spirit is the only reality we directly and indubitably know. It is not an impression on or appearance in our minds, as is the material world, but is reality in itself of which we are immediately aware. We cannot conceive of reality ceasing to be, and therefore the soul is of this imperishable nature. It may be said, however, that this only guarantees the spiritual substance of the soul and not its personality. Our answer to this ominous suggestion is that personality is the highest end we know, to which all other earthly agents and activities are only means. The rock may be said to exist for the soil into which it crumbles, the soil for the plant

which sprouts out of it, the plant for the animal into which it passes, and the animal for man whom it serves. This process has reached no worthy achievement until it comes to a final end that completes and crowns the whole. This worthy end of the world is personality, which flowers out as the final bloom and glory of the whole process of evolution from star dust to man. If the human soul were now to burst and vanish as a bubble on the surface of water or a meteor in the night, then the whole mighty history and struggle of the world has come to nothing and ended in irrationality. The human mind and heart will ever refuse to believe in this wreck of reason and will see in the soul a worthy birth from and end to the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain. As the end of each stage of evolution is cut off from the process and carried up to a higher stage, the wheat from the stalk and the fruit from the tree to serve more valuable ends, so the human soul is plucked from its earthly stalk in the physical body to be carried up into the bosom of God.

III. The inner constitution of the soul bears marks of its endless life. We never see a complete human soul, a finished man in this world; at his highest and best he only "stands half-built against the sky," a mere outline and sketch, a germ and

prophecy of what he may be. The human soul is full of beginnings that are never fulfilled in this life. The intellect is such a beginning. It unfolds its faculties and lays hold of the world of truth in a degree, but never thinks of its attainments as complete; it never sweeps a full circle, but strikes parabolic curves that widen outward forever. Every question it answers only starts a hundred others it has not answered, and thus its ignorance, so to speak, grows faster than its knowledge. However far it pushes the boundaries of its search it finds other fields to explore, and the circle of its light ever impinges upon a vastly larger outlying circle of darkness. Against this rim of the unknown the human mind ever beats as an imprisoned bird against the bars of its cage. It believes it was made to know and has an instinctive faith that God will yet remove the bars and let it know. In a still deeper way the human heart is only a beginning. It has affections that are never satisfied in this life. The love that binds hearts together in kinship and friendship does not exhaust itself with the passage of the years, but grows stronger and sweeter, until it is more precious than life itself. It looks beyond the grave and passionately longs for reunion and completion on the other side. To cut this love off and not crown it with

endless love would be a fatal imperfection and cruel disappointment in the plan of life. This life without another life would be a pitiful and painful fragment. Take away the hope of the other life and this life loses its value and droops to the dust. Give us the other life, and this life takes on infinite value and rises to eternal issues. God hath set eternity in our heart. The whole soul is thus a prophecy and promise of eternal life, and if this be not fulfilled the world is false in its very constitution.

In man's self arise
August anticipations, symbols, types,
Of a dim splendor ever on before
In that eternal circle life pursues.

My own dim life should teach me this,
That life shall live forevermore,
Else earth is darkness at the core,
And dust and ashes all that is.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him; thou art just.

IV. The incompleteness of this world is a further ground for this belief. The world at many points bears the marks of being a preparatory institution. It is a field in which buds are grown but not fruits ripened, a workshop in which products

are roughly shaped out but not finished, a school in which scholars are taken through primary grades but not graduated. Man is never complete in this world because this world cannot complete him; and thus the world by its very nature begins work which only another world can finish. The moral condition of the world also, its frightful inequalities, uncompensated services and unrequited crimes, presents a problem and spectacle which only another world can solve and redress. Conscience cries out against this world as a final settlement of human affairs, and, if it can be trusted and tells the truth, there must be a final bar where all wrongs are made right. God is a God of truth and righteousness and will bring every work into judgment, and judgment has not yet had its day.

V. The Fatherhood of God is a strong ground of trust in this hope. He has brought human souls into being as his children, bearing his image with capacities and yearnings for loving and serving him and dwelling in his eternal fellowship; and as his children they are the objects of his care and love. Such a mutual relation implies permanency on both sides. God having brought forth such children can never be the same without them and they have become necessary to the completeness and joy of his infinite life. "The Father

seeketh such to worship him." And the children never can be complete and satisfied without the Father. Without him they are waifs in a fatherless world, infants crying in the night and with no father to hear their cry. Our hearts revolt against such a conclusion, and we think better of our Father. We refuse to believe that the infinite God is begetting children only to devour them, and all the rationality of our minds and the trust of our hearts convince us that he is true to his Fatherhood and will not cast us to the void.

VI. All of these grounds acquire greater depth and massiveness as they are exhibited in great and noble souls. We can feel the pull of gravity more decisively in a rock than in a grain of sand, and can see more of the sun's splendor reflected in a diamond than in a bit of common glass or a pebble. Life mounts up into vast value in man as compared with the animal. The worth of life as of eternal value shines out more clearly in some men than in others. We might doubt this hope in the case of a degraded savage, but when we listen to Socrates as he is about to drink the hemlock or look at Abraham Lincoln as he bears the sorrows of a nation, we begin to feel the tremendous worth of their souls, and the grounds of belief in human immortality grow weighty and

convincing. This principle reaches its highest expression in Jesus Christ. Viewing him simply on the human plane he rises to heights of moral worth and grandeur that overtop all the centuries and shines as a beacon of light and hope to all succeeding generations. If that great Soul and white Spirit simply vanished into nothingness, then we feel there is no real worth and permanent value anywhere, and the whole fabric of the world crashes into ruin. We refuse to tolerate such irrationality and darkness, and believe that he brings immortality to light. These arguments prove his immortality, but much more does he prove these arguments.

VII. But we cannot view Christ simply on the human plane but must see him as the Son of God who has conquered death and brought immortality out of the region of reason and trust into historic light and fact. The evidences that converge upon his divinity and his resurrection have been presented. They are conclusive with believers and are a foundation of rock on which rests this great belief. They set their seal on all the grounds and intimations of immortality that have persuaded the world of this hope and bring it out of the twilight of speculation and trust into the clear light of day. Standing in this light we look on

death as only the door into our Father's home and are sure of welcome and recognition there. Christ is the Christian's pledge of immortality. In our Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, he would have told us; and thither he has gone to prepare a place for us that where he is there we may be also.[1]

[1] For a discussion of immortality in the light of idealistic philosophy see *The World a Spiritual System,* pp. 233-256.

# CHAPTER XXIX

## LAST THINGS

"THEN cometh the end." This is not a final world: transitoriness is stamped upon its whole framework. Its entire physical fabric from atoms to suns and systems is in a state of ceaseless dissolution; the hills are melting down and the stars burning to ashes. All things human are evanescent, and history is a stream that had a beginning and must have an end, a grand drama on which the curtain will at last be rung down.

I. This end should enter into and shape the present. We are made with the forward look and are constantly considering "the end thereof" in all our affairs. The deeper and more important our plans the farther should they reach into the future, and wise character building requires us to lay great bases in eternity. The end of the world with all that it involves is therefore a vital matter in our present thinking and living. Yet emphasis on this point varies in different ages of the world and with different individual temperaments. The

subject fills a large place in the Epistles of the New Testament because it was then believed that the return of Christ was imminent and the end was likely to crash upon the world at any moment. And so these writings abound in such solemn warnings as, "The time is short," "The Lord is at hand," "The end of all things is at hand," and "Be ye sober and watch unto prayer." This sense of the imminence of the end has faded out of our minds, and we have a comfortable feeling of security in the stability of the world. We put great emphasis on character and conduct in the present life and are less anxious about the future. Nevertheless, we are undoubtedly living in a world that is rushing on towards its end, and the main reason for considering that event still abides. While we ought not to dwell too much on such thoughts and should not grow either excited and feverish with expectation or depressed and morbid with fear, yet we ought to keep the end in view, ever "looking for that blessed hope."

II. The time of this end is unknown to us. This is the one matter which Jesus himself expressly said (Matthew 24:36) he did not know, declaring it was known only to the Father; yet time and again there have been those who have presumed to fix this day down to the very hour.

From the earliest Christian times there has been a difference of opinion as to whether this event may be always imminent, or whether the kingdom of God is to take a long time for its establishment in the world. The first view builds on those passages that represent the day of the Lord as near at hand and warn us to watch; and the other view is based on passages that imply a long period during which the Gospel is to spread through the world. The former view is generally connected with the premillenarian theory that the world is to grow worse rather than better until Christ appears at his second coming and establishes the millennium and reigns in person in the world for a thousand years; after which comes the general judgment. The postmillenarian theory takes the view that the Gospel is slowly to pervade and transform the world into the millennium, at the close of which Christ is to come in the general judgment. There always have been able scholars holding the premillenarian view, but the postmillenarian theory has been and is more generally held. There is much in the teaching of Jesus concerning his kingdom that implies slow processes and a long time. The parables of the good seed growing together with the tares until the final harvest, and of the leaven that is to leaven the

whole mass, are especially strong in this implication, and Jesus sent forth his disciples "to teach all nations, baptizing them,...and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." This is a large program which has as yet only been begun, and it looks through many centuries for its fulfilment. This earth has already been a long time the scene of human development, and it is stocked and equipped with means for vast time and progress yet. It appears to be still young, humanity is yet in the morning of its life, and the future is rosy with the splendid vision of a universal kingdom of God among men.

III. When we try to discern the order and meaning of future events as portrayed in Scripture, we are often in doubt as to their real place, time and significance. Sometimes a gorgeous mass of colors is thrown upon the far horizon in which are vague shapes and movements, and earth and heaven meet and interblend so that it is difficult to tell what pertains to this world and what to the next. But there are some mountain peaks that stand out distinctly. One of these is the second coming of Christ. He repeatedly predicted this event himself with positiveness, and it fills a large place in the New Testament. "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with

his angels, and then shall he reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom" (Matthew 16:27-28). As we have seen, the time of his coming is unknown to us, and there is also difficulty in joining together the various statements concerning it. Sometimes the coming evidently refers to the end of the world, and then again it relates to intermediate events. When Jesus told his hearers that some of them would not taste death until they would see the Son of man coming in his kingdom, he must have referred to an event in their day and generation. The great eschatological discourse recorded in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew refers mostly to the fall of Jerusalem, though it also glances on to the final end. This principle of interpretation can be applied to many of these passages. Christ is coming in a partial way in many of the critical events of the world and kingdom, and in this sense he comes to the believer in death. But all of these partial comings prepare the way for and will culminate in his final coming in which he will appear "in the glory of his Father, with his angels." In this sense the coming of Christ is always imminent to the believer, and we know not the day. "There-

fore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

IV. The final coming of Christ will be attended with two events of overshadowing importance. The first of these will be the resurrection of the dead. The human spirit in this life weaves around itself a mesh of material threads that constitutes its earthly body, which is a medium and instrument adapted to its life in this world. The resurrection means that it will have another body adapted to the other world. The nature of this body is necessarily unknown to us and possibly is inconceivable by us, for it pertains to a mode of existence beyond our experience. Paul throws light upon the subject in his First Epistle to the Corinthians (15:35-58). The doctrine of the resurrection was especially absurd and offensive to the Greeks, and Paul removes some of the misconceptions which were attached to the idea in that day and still adhere to it in some minds in our day. He shows that it is not the same material body which is put into the ground that is to be raised up in the resurrection, but that the connection between the old body and the new is after the manner of the relation of the seed to the flower. It is sown a natural body, or a body adapted to this natural world; and it is raised a spiritual body, or a body

adapted to the spiritual world. As we have senses and organs by which we are exquisitely adjusted to the conditions and needs of our earthly life, so shall we have organs that will perfectly fit and apprehend the glories of the heavenly life. Christ after his resurrection appears to have been clothed in this spiritual body, as it was apparently not subject to the ordinary laws of matter. We cannot see behind this veil, and must await the event, but faith assures us that we shall be clothed upon with a garment whose glory will surpass all we can know or dream.

V. The other critical event attending the second coming of Christ will be the general judgment. This is pictured in the Scriptures as a great assize, or bar, before which men will appear to be judged according to the deeds done in the body. Of course there is much in such descriptions that is necessarily the pictorial drapery of the scene, but the essential reality is plain. It is a primary fact of our human constitution that we are subject to judgment, and the whole meaning and worth of life are expressed in this fact. Conscience is a bar set up in every soul, and judgment is written vividly over all the affairs of this world. In fact, "every day," as Ruskin says, "is a day of judgment and irrevocably writes its verdict in the

flames of the West." But all earthly judgment is imperfect, partial and preparatory to the great day when "the books shall be opened," and "every one of us shall give account of himself unto God," "who will render unto every man according to his deeds." Christ gives a great picture of the judgment (Matthew 25:31-46) in which the King sends men to the right hand of reward, or to the left hand of retribution, according to their deeds, and some of these deeds appear trivial, such as the giving or the refusing of a cup of cold water to a stranger. We may be surprised at the emphasis the Scriptures place upon deeds in the last judgment, and ask where the grace of God in salvation through Christ comes in. But deeds are outer manifestation and evidence of inner faith and motive; they show what is really in the heart as blossoms and fruit show the nature of the tree. We are saved by grace through faith, but faith is genuine only as it becomes fact. The final judgment is thus based on righteous awards. Its decisions rest on no arbitrary grounds or secret decrees, but upon the deeds which every one has done himself and which are thus the expression of his own character and will. In the final result every one thus eats of the fruit of his own doing, and no soul can find fault with the evidence and verdict.

VI. Judgment is followed by division and separation of the righteous from the wicked, and then each company go to their own place. The general and explicit teachings of Scripture represent these rewards and retributions as final. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." The principle of this verdict is that the same spiritual laws that rule in this world run through and rule in the other world. Character tends towards fixity and finality. Righteousness propagates itself and crystallizes into eternal life, and sin is not self-curative but sinks into eternal death. However painfully this mystery may press upon our hearts, we cannot change the laws of character, or turn life into anything else than a tremendous trial that may become a terrible tragedy. God bears the burden of this problem, and we must leave its solution with him. The Scriptural teaching is that the saved will be a great multitude, whom no man can number, and the intimation is that the lost may be few. At any rate, the door of grace and opportunity is now open before us, and a voice is ever saying unto us, "This is the way: walk ye in it." God through Christ will at last bring all things into subjection to him-

self. "Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death. . . . And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected unto him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all."

## CHAPTER XXX

### HEAVEN

We have come to the end of our journey along the pathway of Christian faith and conclude with a glimpse of its final consummation. When traveling towards a city or country we are interested in finding out all we can about it; and if it is to be our home our interest grows intense. Heaven is to be our final home, and our earthly life is a pilgrimage towards it. We are therefore eager to get any bit of news from it we can, and look wistfully towards its gates in the hope that they may be left ajar and some of its glory may stream through. This yearning is not simply idle curiosity, but is a true instinct, and it has not been left unsatisfied. While the heavenly life lies beyond our experience and it hath not entered into the the heart of man to conceive it, yet there are hints and glimpses of it in the Scriptures, and it is right that we should cherish these. Our personal constitution, also, is some guide to our presentiments of heaven. As from the structure of an animal the

naturalist will deduce its environment and describe its whole life, so from the nature of the human soul we can foretell something of that world in which it will realize its full development. The heavenly life will be this life raised to its highest perfection and power.

I. Heaven is pictured as a city in the Scriptural visions of it, and this word contains a world of suggestion. A city is human life crowded to its most glorious expression. All things human are there raised to their highest degree. It is a powerful magnet that attracts to itself the ablest men and the best things. Wealth is there concentrated in a rich soil that blossoms out into magnificent streets, buildings, parks, and works of art. It is the scene of the intensest activities of men, where they fight their greatest battles and win their noblest victories. Human character there attains its fullest and richest development and shines out in its greatest beauty. Great cities have ever been the centers of civilization, the seats of commerce and education, literature and art, government and power. Rome was mistress of the ancient world, Athens was Greece, and Paris is France. It is true that human sin also reaches its greatest intensity in the city. In the midst of its wealth and luxury is the direst poverty, its

palaces stand close to its slums, and beneath its splendid robes are the most hideous shapes of evil. Heaven is a city without sin. All that is good and glorious in the earthly city is there realized in its ideal perfection. Its vast throngs of redeemed souls are organized into a social order of perfect harmony and beauty and blessedness; and its environment consists of pearly gates and golden streets whose splendor surpasses all our dreams.

II. As to the nature of life in this city we can only indulge in general speculations. In the evolution of life the body keeps pace with the development and needs of the soul, and therefore the heavenly body will correspond with the glorified soul. It will be a spiritual body, raised in incorruption, power and glory. It may be endowed with new senses through which life will pour in upon us in new streams of knowledge and beauty. Our senses are so many windows opening out upon the world, and our present bodies are transparent at only five points; but the spiritual body may be transparent through and through, a pure crystal, through which we can look out upon every aspect of the world. It may also be armed with unknown powers by which we can pass with incredible swiftness from point to point and even from world to world. We do not know what we shall

be, but we may well believe that as the slow-crawling, shaggy caterpillar is to the swift-winged, gorgeously-arrayed butterfly, so is this present "muddy vesture of decay" to that glorified body with which we shall be clothed upon.

III. Passing to the mind, we conceive that its essential processes of thought, perception, memory, imagination and reasoning, will still go on, but with increased power and under more favorable conditions. Truth no doubt can be gained there as here only through study. What means we shall use, what teachers and schools and books will be available, we do not know; but in the very nature of finite mind these processes are necessary. With clarified and ever expanding mental faculties, with the universe for our field and eternity for our school days, how shall knowledge grow from more to more; what problems we shall solve, what mysteries unlock, what grand systems construct, how our minds and hearts will glow with ever brighter visions of truth and beauty! Here we have but hints and gleams of truth, but there we shall begin to know what mind means and shall revel in its power. Yet we shall never reach the utmost bound of truth where only omniscience dwells in light unapproachable, and the wider grows our knowledge the vaster will be the circle of

mystery that will forever shut us in and lure us on.

IV. Our affectional nature will come to its full flower in heaven. If anything in us is immortal it surely is affection. Life is love more than anything else, and if this bright warm strand were pulled out of our redeemed nature it would be rifled of its richness and left colorless and cold. We shall there be social beings, knit together in service and companionship, friendship and love. Memory will bind us together in heavenly recognition of earthly ties. The same currents of affection that flow through our lives here will there flow in deeper and richer streams. Affection will be purified from passion and burn in ethereal flames. It will be universally diffused so that each one will love all and all will love each, and yet it will glow intensely in personal relations.

V. The esthetic nature will also come to its finest bloom in the heavenly life. Beauty is eternal, for it has its fountain and essence in the nature of God. As he has made this world so beautiful, how much more beautiful will be the higher and more perfect world, and how much fuller and richer will be the gratification of our esthetic faculties. All the Scriptural descriptions of heaven strain language to the utmost to give us some faint conception of its ineffable beauty. Its foundations

are precious stones, its gates are pearls, and its streets are gold. This blossom-decked, star-fretted world is but a hint of the infinite wealth and splendor of beauty that will array that world in all lovely forms and colors. And of course there is music in heaven. John heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps, and they sang a new song. All the chords and songs of earth are but introductory to the symphonies of those golden strings. All life will there express itself in artistic forms: all truth will be poetry, all scenes pictures, and all sounds music. Every one's sense of beauty will there be developed and given full expression and be satisfied.

VI. Our moral and religious nature will reach its highest development and employment in heaven. The same principles of truth, honor, justice, gentleness, goodness and love that bind us here will rule us there: only there will be no inner resistance and outer opposition to obstruct these laws and make them seem harsh restrictions upon our desires and freedom; but they will be so wrought into us that they will be our own spontaneous nature, and duty and desire will coincide in perfect and joyous liberty. Worship will also there reach its highest expression and joy. The sense of worship, which is just our sense of worth, will be

purified and deepened through our whole nature; there we shall be able to see things so as to appreciate them at their true worth; there we shall be closer to God and dwell in his light; and there we shall see Jesus. And yet there will be no formal ordinances of worship, for there is no temple in heaven. Symbolic shadows have vanished and only realities remain. All life there is religious, all days holy, and all work worship. There is no temple in that city because the whole city is one vast temple.

VII. There will be employments in heaven that will match all our faculties. We are essentially active beings and never could be anything else. Our employments will be even more diversified in heaven than they are on earth. We shall there still have gifts differing, and every one will be given service that suits and satisfies him. What this service will be we cannot now know, but it will surely be useful service, and doubtless one form of it will consist in serving one another. As civilization becomes more complex we become more and more dependent upon one another. This principle doubtless runs on up into heaven, and there we may be dependent on one another as we never have been before. God will have abundance of work for us to do. "His servants shall serve

him." What forms this service will assume, on what missions to far-off worlds it may send us, what responsibilities it may impose and rewards it may win, we cannot know, but it will turn all life into ministering and crown and glorify it with unselfishness and love; and all work and worship, life and love will there run up into and be lost in the life and glory of God.

It may be asked, where comes in the reward, the rest, the joy of heaven, if life there is all service? The rest and reward consist in this service itself. The rest of heaven is not simply eternal idleness. Such rest would soon make us tired. The sunbeam that seems absolutely still and yet is incessantly active is a symbol of the heavenly life. The activities of the redeemed are attended with no friction and fatigue, but operate with perfect smoothness and ease: they are that perfect work that is also perfect play. We shall rest in heaven, not from our work, but in our work.

> Rest is not quitting
> The busy career;
> Rest is the fitting
> Of self to one's sphere.

The highest reward of service is always higher service. Joy is not something we get by itself, but it is just the music that floats off the harp of

life when it is in perfect tune and is properly struck. In this discordant world righteousness and reward, work and rest, service and satisfaction often get separated, but in that perfect world they are indissolubly interblended, and there all joy is service, and all service is joy.

VIII. How does this view of the celestial city help our earthly life? What relation have the employments here to the employments there? They are training and preparation. The boy at school, poring over books and wrestling with hard lessons, is gathering knowledge, forming habits and developing power for coming responsibilities and service. Though he knows it not, every lesson mastered is a stone built into the structure of future years. What he will be then depends on what he is doing now. This world is a school, and all our life is a training and preparation for the life to come. Every earthly day puts something into that celestial life, weaves a strand into the garment of character we shall there wear, fits us for some service that shall there be our employment. This thought lifts up every day and deed and makes it big with destiny and transfigures it with coming glory. Even the hardships and losses, the disappointments and discouragements, the sufferings and sorrows of this world are

working for us and shall be caught up into that song.

One summer evening a little company of us were descending a steep mountain road from the Wetterhorn in the Alps, when suddenly music came floating around us from some unseen source. It was pure impersonal music, so distilled that no sediment of mere sound was left to blur the exquisite harmony. It was clearer than any piano note, finer than any strain of violin, more resonant than any peal of bells, richer than any organ swell, sweeter than any human voice. We listened to hear whence it came. The mountain of rock rose above us half a mile high and at the top was splintered into crags. The music came from that mighty wall of stone. The whole mountain seemed full of it, pulsing and throbbing with its burden of song. Again and again it pealed forth like a mighty cathedral bell the volume of harmony, so full, so grandly sweet, so all-encompassing that the atmosphere for miles around seemed pregnant with the glory. The notes swept up the mountain side from ledge to ledge, leaping and ringing out clearer and finer from the higher crags; lingering in silvery echoes among the loftiest peaks; fading into enchanting whispers and dying away in solemn silence. What did it mean? Far-

ther down the road we came upon a mountaineer with his Alpine horn, a big wooden instrument, ten feet long, the flaring end of which fitted into a box that opened out like a hopper. He blew a blast for us, but it was only a loud raucous noise that was far from pleasing to the ear. Yet it was that rude horn, blown by that rough mountaineer far down in the valley, that was making that celestial music up among the summits of the Alps. The majestic mountain with its heart full of melody gathered up those rough sounds and transformed and transfigured them into harmonies so divine.

So may the life on earth be transfigured into the life in heaven. The instruments on which we play may be rude and clumsy, the sounds we make may often seem rasping and discordant, we may be shut in far down the valley, all the conditions of our life may seem narrow and its service hard, but when these experiences are caught up into the celestial world they may be transformed into such music as will make our heaven forever. This hope makes life worth living and glorifies every common deed. Even now we may begin to weave these notes of Christian character and service into triumphant chords and songs that will make all our days a chorus of joy. Already the strings of life may begin to tremble and swell with celestial

strains. Let us be faithful down in the valley, and at last up on the mountain summit we shall touch the golden harp of perfect character and join in the song of eternal joy.

---

Father of our spirits, and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we thank Thee for the gift of life with all its powers and possibilities; for the revelation Thou hast made of Thyself through the great bible of the natural world, through the inner world of reason and conscience, through the inspired Word, and especially through Thy Son, the express image of Thy person and the brightness of Thy glory; for redemption from our sin through Thy grace; and for life more abundant, blessed and beautiful through faith in and fellowship with Thee in Jesus Christ. Open our eyes and show us these things in their wondrous truth and power. May we see them more clearly in our minds, feel them more deeply in our hearts, and work them out more fruitfully in our lives. Dwell in our hearts by faith and inspire us with humble trust, masterful zeal and joyous hope. May all our life be environed with Thy presence and saturated with Thy Spirit. May we love our fellowmen and pour out our lives in service and sacrifice. Through all our temptations, trials and tears, keep us in Thy love; and at last bring us home to Thyself that we may dwell with Thee forever. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

As this little book may lead some of its readers to desire to pursue the subject further, a few books are here recommended out of the vast literature of this field.

(1) *Christianity: Its Nature and Its Truth,* by Arthur S. Peake, D.D., Professor of Biblical Exegesis in the University of Manchester (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Company, $1.25 net), is an admirable exposition and defense of the main facts and doctrines of Christian faith. It is informed by sound scholarship and is clear in its style and convincing in its logic.

(2) *The Grounds of Theistic and Christian Belief,* by the late Professor George Park Fisher, D.D., of Yale University (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, $2.50), is probably the best volume in English on the evidences of Christianity. It first appeared in 1883, but in 1902 it was mostly rewritten and enlarged, and is an up to date work. It is founded on ample scholarship and gives a full and thorough discussion of the main points of theism and Christianity. It is characterized by singular

fairness and candor, is engaging in its style and greatly fortifies the believer in his faith, and yet must win the respect, if not the belief, of the doubter.

(3) Works on the atonement are specially numerous and are often difficult to understand or unsatisfactory in their theories. A little book of special value for the lay reader is *Lessons from the Cross,* by Charles Brown, an English Baptist minister, and published in this country by the Fleming H. Revell Company (50 cents). It consists of eight brief chapters, but they are wonderfully clear and convincing as they lead the reader along on the grounds of Scripture and reason from simpler to deeper views of the Cross.

(4) One of the notable books of recent theology is *An Outline of Christian Theology,* by William Newton Clarke, D.D., Professor of Christian Theology in Colgate University (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, $2.50). The distinguishing note of this book is reality. It carries into the mind of the reader the conviction that the author is intent only on getting at the truth and that he is reaching it. It is remarkably clear and simple in its reasoning, and it is pervaded with a devotional flavor that is quite unusual in such works and feeds the reader's heart as well as instructs his mind. The

lay reader will have no difficulty in understanding and appreciating Dr. Clarke's work.

(5) A larger work but one still within the grasp of the lay reader is the recently completed *Systematic Theology* of Augustus Hopkins Strong, D.D., President of the (Baptist) Rochester Theological Seminary (Philadelphia: The Griffith & Rowland Press. Three volumes, $7.50). The author denotes his work "A Compendium and Commonplace-Book," and this accurately describes it. The main text consists of brief paragraphs in large type, which is then explained by paragraphs in smaller type in which are fuller elucidations and numerous brief quotations from authors of various schools of thought. It is a mine of information on all the leading theories of all the facts and doctrines of Christianity, and is invaluable in this respect. While it is a learned book and displays enormous reading and scholarship, yet the layman or student who wants to go thoroughly into theology will find this work helpful as a handbook of the whole subject.

(6) It may be well to name one book of philosophical depth and power: *The Philosophy of the Christian Religion,* by Andrew Martin Fairbairn, D.D., Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, England (New York: The Macmillan Company, $3.50). This profound work deals with the deepest problems

of religion and theology with masterly grasp and power, and it is written in stately eloquence. While it is addressed to scholars and thinkers, yet a layman of general education will find it illuminating and inspiring. Another work of great value by Dr. Fairbairn is *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.50). It traces the development of Christian doctrine and polity through the Christian centuries and shows how they adopted and adapted various elements of Greek and Roman and then of medieval and modern thought and life, and branched out into existing creeds and churches. It gives us a swift review of the evolution of Christianity and shows us how we came to be what we are.

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